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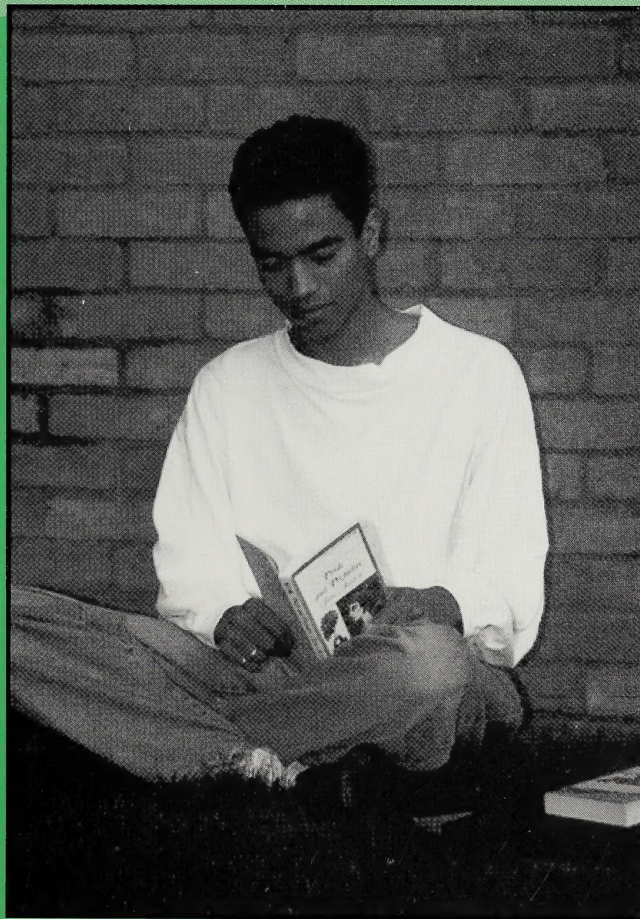
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English 30


Module 7

The Novel



Distance
Learning

Alberta
EDUCATION



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English 30

Module 7

THE NOVEL



**Distance
Learning**

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EDUCATION

This document is intended for	
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Teachers (English 30)	✓
Administrators	
Parents	
General Public	
Other	

English 30
 Student Module
 Module 7
 The Novel
 Alberta Distance Learning Centre
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Welcome to Module 7!

We hope you'll enjoy your study of
The Novel.

We've included a prerecorded
audiocassette with this module. The
cassette will help you work through
the material and it will enhance your
listening skills.

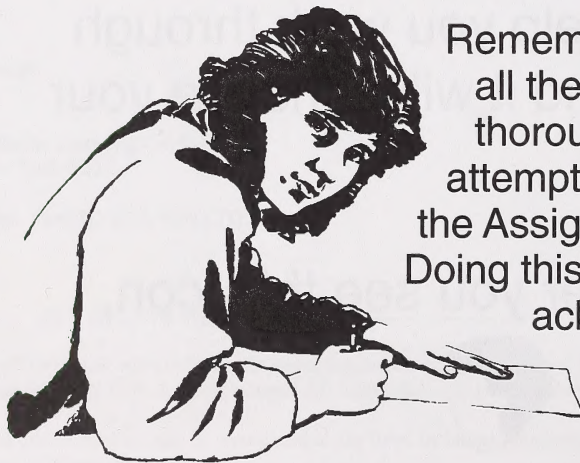
So whenever you see this icon,



turn on your tape and listen.

One important resource you'll be using all the time is your notebook. Because there are no response lines provided in the Student Module Booklets of this course, you'll need a notebook or lined paper to respond to questions, complete charts, and answer questionnaires. It's important to keep your lined paper handy as you work through the material and to keep your responses together in a notebook or binder for review purposes later. Read all of the questions carefully, and respond to them as completely as possible. Then compare your responses with the ones supplied in the Appendix.

Some of your personal responses you'll be asked to keep in a separate folder – your Writing Folder. This process is explained in Module 1.



Remember to work through all the module activities thoroughly before attempting the questions in the Assignment Booklet. Doing this will help you to achieve better success in your studies.

Good luck.

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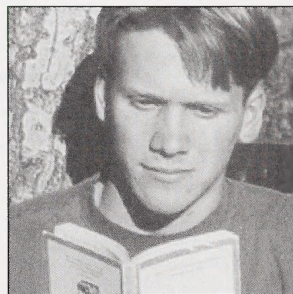


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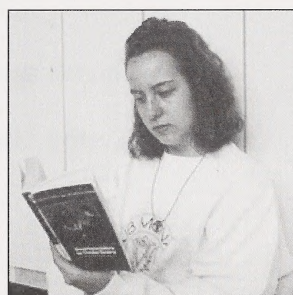


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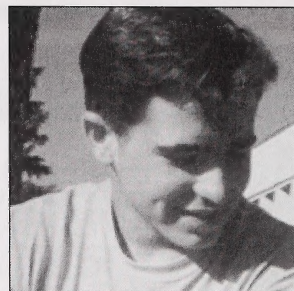


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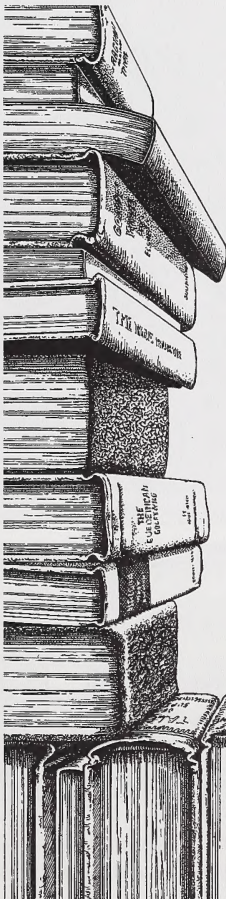
MODULE OVERVIEW



A novel is a mirror that strolls along a highway. Now it reflects the blue of the skies, now the mud puddles underfoot.

So wrote Stendhal, one of the leading French novelists of the nineteenth century. As the quotation suggests, a novel can be just about anything – as long as it's truthful and portrays life honestly, with its beauty and with its warts intact.

In this module you'll be reading a novel that you've selected from quite an extensive list of works authorized by Alberta Education for English 30 students. The list includes a great deal of variety – from eighteenth-century English novels to very recent American and Canadian works, from novels of several hundred pages to others of barely a hundred pages. One thing they all have in common, though, is that they're works that entertain their readers while communicating a great deal about life and the human condition. Whichever novel you select should live up to Stendhal's description.



Module 7: THE NOVEL

Section 1: Reading the Novel

Section 2: Thinking About Your Novel

Section 3: The Novel – A Final Look

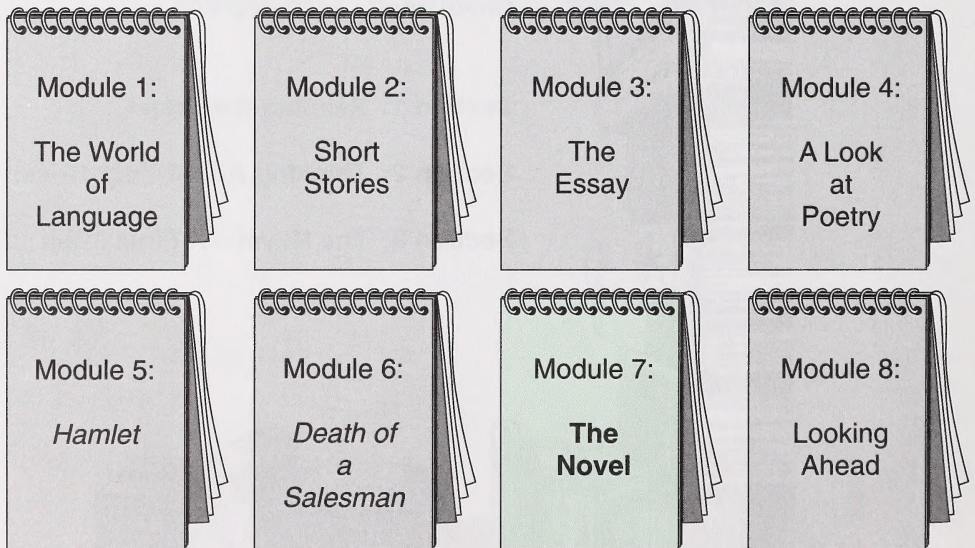
Evaluation

Your mark in this module will be determined by how well you complete the work in your Assignment Booklet. In this module you must complete three section assignments. The mark distribution is as follows:

Section 1 Assignment	30 marks
Section 2 Assignment	35 marks
Section 3 Assignment	35 marks
TOTAL	100 marks

COURSE OVERVIEW

English 30 contains eight modules.



SECTION

1

READING THE NOVEL

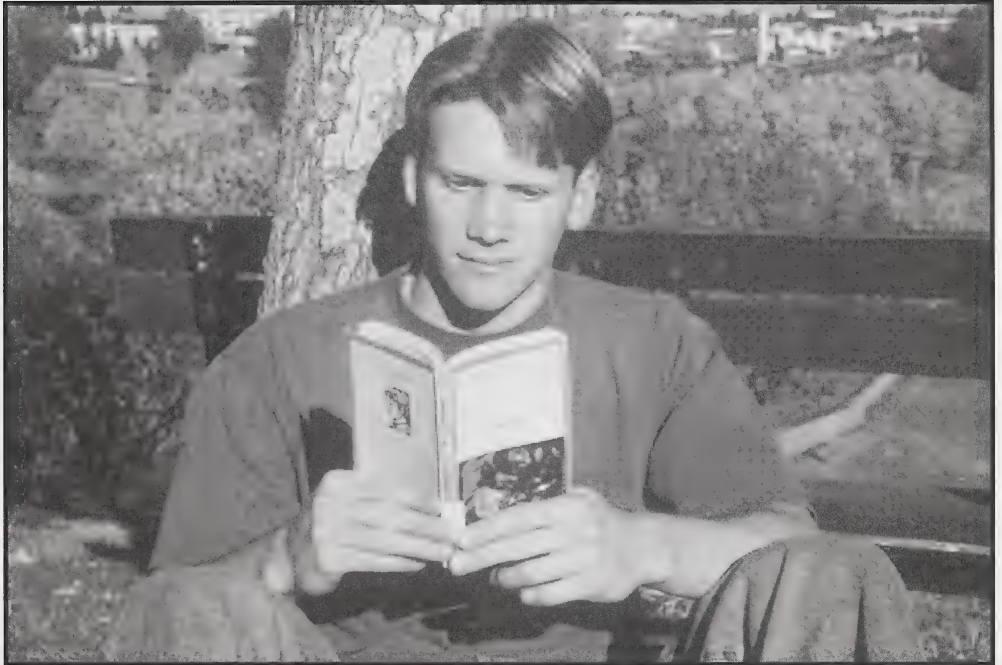


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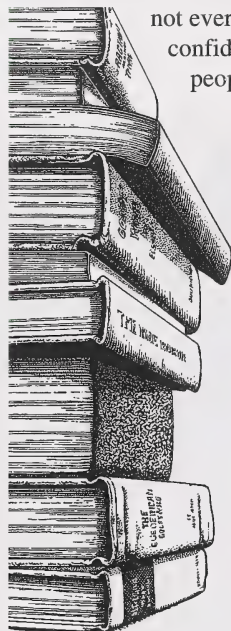
Are you someone who's discovered the pleasure of finding a nice, comfortable spot, away from the distractions and annoyances of day-to-day life, and slipping into another world – the world of a good novel? If so, you're one of those fortunate people who have found a wonderful way to unwind and recharge their batteries while, perhaps, expanding their understanding of life and the human condition. If not, it's something you should work on, for reading a gripping novel really is one of life's most rewarding – and cheapest! – pleasures.

In Section 1 you'll certainly get the chance to develop your novel-reading skills because in this section you'll be reading an entire novel, making notes as you go, and responding to what you read. In your Section 1 Assignment, you'll be asked to demonstrate a basic understanding of your novel and to appraise the work from a personal point of view.

What Is a Novel?



Novel: a lengthy work of prose fiction intended to offer pleasure and/or intellectual stimulation



The **novel** is a relatively new literary genre – only a few hundred years old. Hence its name – *novel* – which derives from the Latin word *novellus*, meaning *new*. Believe it or not, not everyone agrees as to just what a novel is, though most of us are pretty confident that we know one when we see it. The essential ingredients that most people agree a novel must have are these:

- It's written in prose.
- It's long (at least fifty thousand words, according to most authorities).
- It's a work of fiction.
- It's meant to offer pleasure and/or intellectual stimulation to readers.

Novels, of course, come in all shapes and sizes and can occupy any spot on the escape/interpretive continuum. Whether your taste runs to detective stories, thrillers, romances, or works of nineteenth-century Russian authors, there's always something new to try in the world of the novel. Probably because they're so accessible, come in such a variety, and have the length necessary for delving deeply into the complexities of human life novels are by far the most popular literary genre of our times. People who would never dream of reading a poem, short story, or essay will spend hours immersed in the fictitious worlds created by novelists. And unlike some other genres, novels are somehow down-to-earth; they usually deal with real human beings facing situations we can at least imagine ourselves having to face.



Ms. Jensen, I don't get this business about the novel being a new genre; I mean, haven't people been telling long, fictional stories for thousands of years?

Certainly, but they weren't novels. The epic poems of ancient Greece, for instance, like the Iliad and Odyssey, were composed in verse, not prose, and they were believed to be fact, not fiction. And some would say that, unlike novels, they had no unifying plots; they just recounted events that were thought to have occurred.





So when was the first real novel written?

Oh yeah, he's the guy who wrote Tom Jones, isn't he?



Not everyone is agreed on that one, Sue. For example, some people claim that Robinson Crusoe, written around 1720, was a novel, but others say it has no real plot – just a series of events that left the protagonist entirely unchanged. Most people feel that Henry Fielding, who lived in the first half of the eighteenth century, was the first true English novelist.

Yes, that's right.

Your Choice of Novel

Up to this point in the course, you've been assigned works of literature to read. In this module, however, you'll be given quite a broad range of novels out of which you're to select the one you'd like to explore. This list should include something for just about any taste; so be careful, in making your selection, that you choose a work you think you might enjoy. The list of possible choices is as follows:

English 30 Novels

- *The Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.)
- *Davita's Harp* by Chaim Potok (Toronto: Random House of Canada Limited)
- *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company)
- *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books Canada Limited)
- *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (Toronto/New York: Bantam Classic Press)
- *Mizzly Fitch: The Light, the Sea, the Storm* by Murray Pura (Toronto: Simon and Pierre Publishing Company Limited)
- *Monsignor Quixote* by Graham Greene (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books Canada Limited)*
- *The Mosquito Coast* by Paul Theroux (New York: Avon Books)
- *The Outsider* by Albert Camus (Toronto: Penguin Books)
- *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- *Saint Maybe* by Anne Tyler (Toronto: Penguin Books Canada Limited)
- *The Stone Angel* by Margaret Laurence (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc.)
- *Under the Ribs of Death* by John Marlyn (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc.)
- *Wild Geese* by Martha Ostenso (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc.)
- *Windflower* by Gabrielle Roy (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc.)
- *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

*Though easy to read and delightfully written, this novel assumes some understanding of Christian doctrine, Marxism, Roman Catholicism, and communism. It would also help to have a knowledge of Miguel de Cervantes' early seventeenth-century work *Don Quixote*.

You'll be responsible for obtaining the novel you choose to read. You may decide to buy a copy from a bookstore or to borrow one from your local library; or you might consider asking your local school for a copy. If you opt for one of the older novels on the list, don't worry about the publishers' names; an earlier edition published by another company will be fine. But do take the time you need to make a careful decision; browsing in a bookstore or library will help you make a wise selection.

NOTE: The novels on this list have all been authorized and carefully selected for English 30 by Alberta Education. Some, however, may contain material that individual students might find objectionable on religious or moral grounds; so make your selection carefully. You'll be given the option of switching to a different novel at the end of Activity 2 if this becomes desirable.



Ms. Jensen, I'm having trouble deciding on a novel. There's so much variety. Like, one I looked at is only about 130 pages, but others are hundreds of pages long.

I hope you won't make your decision on that basis, Wes. Choose the novel you think you'll get the most out of. You're right in noting that there's quite a variety in the lengths and reading levels of the listed novels; that just reflects the range of interests and reading skills among English 30 students. If you're a strong reader but you pick a book just because it looks easier or shorter than others, I'll guarantee you won't get out of it what you should.



If you haven't yet obtained the novel you intend to read, now is the time to get a copy. You'll need it to complete this activity.

Approaching Your Novel

No doubt you don't need instruction in how to go about reading a novel, but studying a work of fiction so as to come to understand it fully is a rather more complex task than merely reading. Remember, the making of meaning in literature requires the meeting of two minds – the writer's and the reader's – and the more aware readers are, the more intelligently they can respond to what writers have said. The following short discussion is designed to help you maximize what you'll get out of your novel-reading experience.

Working with a Partner

First, if it's at all possible, it would help if you could get a reading partner – someone with whom you can compare notes and responses, discuss issues and ideas, and answer each other's questions. Of course if you're working independently, this probably won't be possible; but remember, the module is designed for independent study, so you won't be put at a disadvantage. However, reading with a partner can increase the pleasure of a reading experience as well as the understanding it gives you.

Researching the Author

Next comes the question of the author's milieu. You've seen in previous modules how knowing something about the milieu out of which works of literature emerge can increase your understanding of those works.

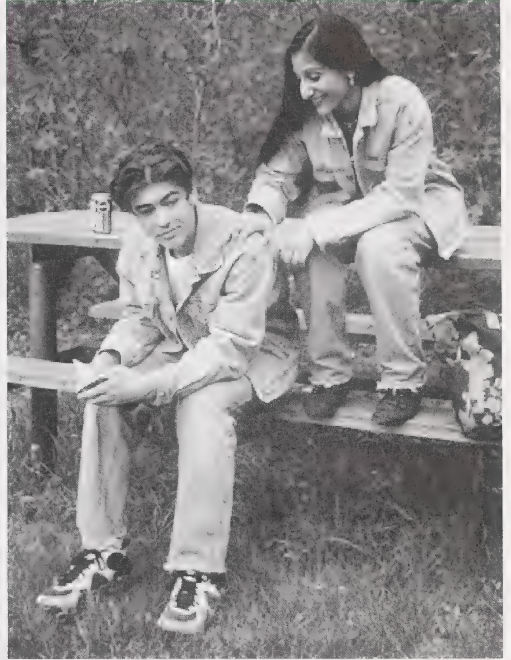


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But I prefer to read a book without thinking of that sort of stuff. I mean, shouldn't the book speak for itself? If we're always looking for reflections of the writer's life and times, we don't really pay as close attention to what the book has to say.

Good point. And that's why I'm leaving it up to you whether you choose to investigate the life of the writer of your novel now or later on when you've finished reading. But be warned that you will be expected to research the life of your writer later in the module if you choose not to do it now.



If you'd like to research the author of your novel now, you may need the help of your librarian. A good place to start is an encyclopedia, especially for well-known writers. For information on authors not yet established enough to have been included in an encyclopedia, there are a number of sources to which you can turn, among them the following:

- *Dictionary of Literary Biography*
- *Contemporary Authors*
- *Twentieth Century Authors*
- *World Authors*

Previewing Your Novel

In Module 1 the value of previewing a written work before actually reading it was discussed and you were asked to preview your English 30 course materials. Just as good skiers will reconnoitre the terrain of a hill before skiing it, so good readers will try to become familiar with a book they're about to tackle so they'll know just what to expect when they get into it. Here are some of the steps you can take to preview your novel:

- If your novel has a dust jacket, read the material on the back and inside the flaps; if it's a paperback, read the back.
- Note such things as the number of pages and the size of the type used.
- Note the number and length of chapters; if the chapters have titles, skim the table of contents.
- If your novel has a foreword, read it.
- Skim a page or two at random, noting such things as level of language (formal, casual, old-fashioned and so on), length and structuring of sentences, and complexity of ideas.

When you've finished your survey, you should have a good idea of what to expect in the novel you're about to read.

Take a few minutes now to preview your novel. As you preview, jot down the important things you learn about your novel.

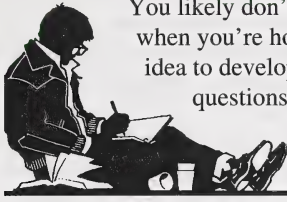


WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following questions.

Describe your feelings upon starting to read a novel (pleasant anticipation? excitement? annoyance? dread?). Explain why you feel this way. What do you expect to find in the novel you've selected? How much do you anticipate enjoying and/or learning from the experience?

Making Notes



You likely don't ordinarily make notes when you read a novel for pure pleasure, but when you're hoping to get more out of a book than sheer entertainment, it's a good idea to develop a system for jotting down – or otherwise noting – ideas and questions that occur as you read. There's no one best note-making system; the best technique is the one that works for you. However, here are a few pointers that might give you some direction in making notes while reading your novel:

- For more complex novels with many characters, it can help to make a list of characters as you encounter them with a brief note on each one (for example, "Character X is Character Y's father and works in a bank.").
- For some novels mapping the setting as it's described can help you visualize events and so better understand the story.
- Try to take the time to jot down questions or thoughts as they occur to you while reading. Otherwise they're likely to be forgotten.
- Note any allusions the author makes that are unfamiliar and that you can't figure out from context clues.
- Try, as well, to note any wordings that strike you as particularly interesting or colourful. Do this for any passages that seem to be of unusual significance. Such passages are sometimes called **key quotations**; more will be said about them later.

Key Quotation:
a passage in a work of literature that is of unusual significance for character development, theme, or some other aspect of the work



Ms. Jensen, this is all very well, but if I take the time to make all those notes, I'm certainly not going to enjoy the novel very much; it's going to be more like work than fun.

I know what you mean, Rico, but you know, making notes does help focus your mind; it keeps you thinking about what you're reading.





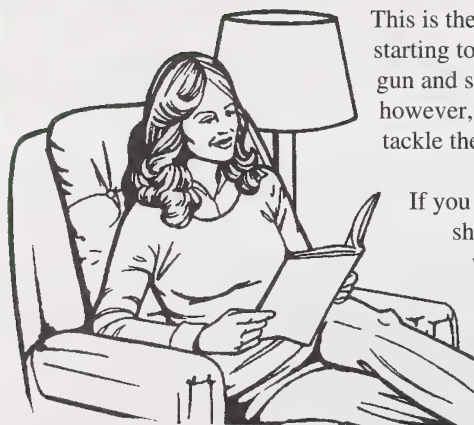
What I do is use those little yellow stickies to flag pages that are important. Sometimes I write a word or two on a sticky to remind myself of what I wanted to remember.

Good idea. Of course, if you own the book you're reading, you can write all sorts of margin notes, and underline key quotations – all that sort of thing. Librarians don't much appreciate it when you do that to library books, though.



Whatever system of note taking you adopt, do take the time somehow to record the sorts of things mentioned above; it will help you later in the module while ensuring that you're reading actively and thoughtfully.

Activity 2: Reading the Opening Chapter(s)

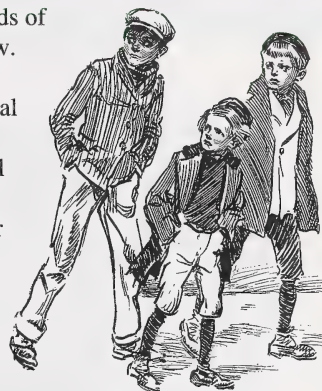


This is the activity you've been waiting for; in it you'll be starting to read your chosen novel (if you haven't jumped the gun and started already). Before you begin reading, however, here are a few things to be thinking about as you tackle the opening chapters.

If you cast your mind back briefly to Module 1, you should recall the discussion there of the fictional worlds that writers of fiction create. Whether these worlds are highly exotic or virtually identical to the one you live in, it's important for writers to present them in such a way that readers find them believable and feel drawn into them. A writer who creates an unconvincing fictional world or one that's so uninteresting it fails to entice

readers during the opening chapters will not be very successful. How many novels have you put aside after reading a chapter or two because you found them dull or perhaps silly?

Fictional worlds, as you know, vary from the highly exotic worlds of science fiction or fantasy to worlds identical to the one you know. The novel you've selected may present you with a story set in a world that's very different from your own because of its historical era as well as its geographical location; examples would be *Wuthering Heights* and *Great Expectations*. In such cases you'll likely encounter such things as different patterns of speech and sometimes very different issues and concerns from those of your own era. Other novels, such as *A Farewell to Arms*, will present you with a somewhat more familiar world, but one in which the background against which the events occur (in this case World War I) changes that world fundamentally.



As you begin reading your novel, try to be aware of the fictional world into which the writer is inviting you. Think of the era, the location, the background circumstances. Note the way people speak, what concerns they have, and how they behave. Be alert to similarities and differences between this fictional world and the real world you know. Above all, ask yourself questions like these:

- How does the book try to draw me into its world?
- To what degree is the fictional world convincing?
- How similar is this fictional world to my own world? How dissimilar?
- How successful is the writer in drawing me into his or her fictional world?



Now it's time to start reading. Pick up your novel, find a quiet, comfortable spot, free from distractions if possible, and read the opening chapter(s) of your novel. Because chapter lengths vary greatly from novel to novel, you should read one or more chapters at this point depending on the length of the ones in your book. If, for instance, you're reading Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, you'd be advised to read the first three or four chapters. By contrast, if you're reading Murray Pura's *Mizzly Fitch*, which has only three chapters (perhaps *parts* would be a more appropriate word), of course you should read no more than the first one. Remember to be an alert, active reader. When you've finished reading, answer the questions that follow.

1. In a short paragraph, describe briefly what's going on at the start of your novel.
2. Briefly describe the setting. Where are events taking place? In what era are they occurring? What important and/or interesting aspects of the setting did you note?
3.
 - a. Give brief descriptions of the characters you've encountered in the opening chapter(s) of your novel.
 - b. At this stage who appears to be the protagonist? How do you know?
4.
 - a. From what point of view is the novel told?
 - b. Why do you suppose the writer selected this particular perspective to narrate the events of your novel?
5. At this early stage are any conflicts apparent? Can you predict what conflicts will likely develop? Explain.

6. Describe the mood evoked by the opening chapter(s) of your novel. Refer to at least **two** passages or features of the text that contribute to this mood.
7.
 - a. Describe the fictional world the writer creates in the opening chapter(s) of the novel.
 - b. What techniques does the writer employ to draw the reader in?
 - c. Do you find this fictional world convincing? intriguing? Why or why not?
8. To help you organize and express your thoughts and responses to the introductory chapter(s) of your novel, copy and fill in the following chart.

Early Response to the Novel	
A sketch of the strongest image the novel has created in your mind so far.	Questions you have about the novel up to this point.
Thoughts/feelings the beginning of the novel has generated in you.	Your expectations or predictions about what will happen in the novel.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 2.

At this point you should be nicely established in your novel. In the next two activities you'll complete your reading. If by any chance at this stage you feel that you've made a poor selection or that your novel likely contains material that you'll find offensive on religious or moral grounds, now is the time to make a new selection and repeat Activities 1 and 2. At this stage, before you've invested a great deal of time into your novel, starting over won't take long; this will no longer be the case after Activity 3.

Activity 3: Reading to the Middle



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In this activity you'll be doing a good deal of reading in your novel. If your book is one of the longer ones on the list, it may take you quite a while to get through the activity. But don't panic; just take the time you require and enjoy your novel.



Personally, I intend to read mine during commercials.



I know that was meant to be funny, Wes, but it addresses an important issue – how you do your reading. Here are a few hints. First, find a nice, comfortable spot – but not too comfortable; you don't want to get sleepy. Next, try to get away from as many distractions as possible – like the TV, Wes, and people who might want to talk to you. And last of all – and this is important – try to give yourself big blocks of time for your reading so you can really get into the book.



I like to read in bed just before going to sleep.

*So do I, but that's not always the best time to do serious, **active** reading. It's best to do that sort of reading when you're wide awake.*



The main thing to do as you read is to slip into the world of your novel and get caught up in what goes on there. However, as you do that, try to remember to stay alert and to keep asking questions like the following:

- What inferences does the author expect readers to make?
- How is character developed?
- How convincing are the characters?
- With what topics is the writer dealing? What does he or she seem to be saying about them?
- What does the writer's purpose in writing seem to be – other than simply entertaining readers?
- What values of the writer are revealed in the novel?
- What tone does the writer adopt toward his or her material? What mood is developed?
- How might you describe the writer's style?
- To what degree does the novel achieve verisimilitude?
- To what degree does it achieve artistic unity?
- Does the novel make use of irony? Is it satirical?
- What key quotations can you note?
- What interesting and/or colourful wordings do you notice?
- What advantages does the writer gain from the point of view he or she has adopted? Can readers take the narrator's observations at face value?



You mean I'm supposed to enjoy the novel **and** keep all that in mind!



It's not as hard as it seems – especially if you have the habit of using those little stickies or have your own copy of the book to underline or highlight important passages. But above all else, what's most important is that you enjoy your reading; if necessary, you can always go back later and reread parts for other purposes.

Novel



Turn now to where you left off in your novel and read roughly to the middle of the book. Take the time you need to maximize the pleasure and understanding you get from the novel. When you've finished your reading, answer the questions that follow. (You may want to skim over the questions before doing your reading.)

WRITING FOLDER

In Your Writing Folder respond to the following:

Now that you've read halfway through your novel, describe your reaction to the book. What do you especially like about it? What do you dislike? Imagine for the moment that you were the novelist. What would you have done differently?

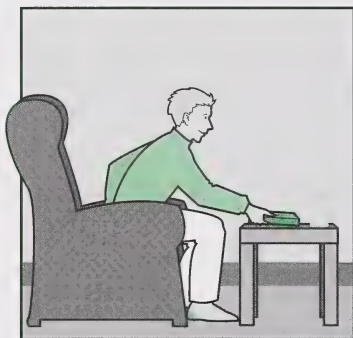
1. From anywhere in the first half of your novel quote **three** short passages that you consider to be key quotations – passages particularly important for revealing character, theme, or some other aspect of the work. For each key quotation you cite, explain what it contributes to your understanding of the novel.
2. List **three** passages (other than those cited in response to question 1) in which the writer of your novel expects readers to make an inference. Tell what you infer from each passage.
3. From what you've read up to this point, how faithful is your chosen novel to life as you know it? Are the characters and their behaviour plausible? Has the writer achieved verisimilitude? Explain your response with direct references to the novel.
4. Quote **three** examples of interesting wordings you noted as you read. Explain what you find interesting about each.

5. Briefly explain the novel's central conflict as it's developed so far. How would you classify this conflict?
6. Do you have any comprehension concerns at this point in your reading? If so, note them here for future reference. If you have a reading partner, discuss them with that person before reading on. Otherwise, talk them over with your teacher or learning facilitator.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 3.

You've now read roughly half of your novel. In the next activity you'll be finishing the book. Happy reading!

Activity 4: Finishing Your Novel



This activity will be structured much like the preceding one because now you'll be reading the second half of your novel. Once again, be sure to take the time you need to read thoughtfully, and bear in mind the sorts of things to which you should be alert while reading (see the list in Activity 3). Keep making notes.

Turn now to where you left off in your novel and finish reading it. When you've finished, respond to the questions that follow (again, you might want to read through the questions before doing the reading).

1. In Activities 1 and 2 you were asked to predict what you'd find in your selected novel. Go back and reread your predictions. To what degree were they borne out?
2. Did the ending of your novel surprise you or was it entirely predictable? Explain your answer.
3.
 - a. Did you encounter puzzling allusions anywhere in your novel? If so, list **four or five** of the most obscure ones.
 - b. Suggest what steps you might take to discover the meaning of these allusions.
 - c. Now follow your own advice and see if you can find out what these allusions refer to. If all else fails, discuss them with your reading partner, teacher, or learning facilitator.
4. Does your novel contain any irony? If so, describe it and explain what it adds to the work.
5. List any other comprehension concerns you have. Discuss them with your partner, teacher, or learning facilitator.

Compare you responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 4.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

1. How do you feel about the way your novel ended? Would you change it if you could? If so, explain how and why.
2. Imagine that you could meet the author of your novel. What would you tell him or her about your thoughts on the book? What questions would you ask?



Congratulations! You've now finished reading your English 30 novel, you've generated a number of personal responses to it, and you've answered some questions that lay the groundwork for a critical response. In Section 2 you'll delve more deeply into your analysis of the book you've just read.

Follow-up Activities

If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

Extra Help

In this section you've read an entire novel. Depending on how long your novel was, this may have been a very time-consuming project, but it's to be hoped it's one you found worthwhile.

1. In earlier grades you were probably asked to read a number of novels and write – and sometimes orally present – book reports on them. If you find this process helpful in sorting out the different aspects of books you read and your reactions to them, perhaps it would be a good idea to write a report on your English 30 novel – or at least to fill in a chart.



Remember, this is an optional activity, but the layout of a standard book report can help you clarify things about a novel you've just read. I recommend doing this only to students who feel somewhat insecure about their understanding of their novels. Other students should feel free to skip this optional activity.

Following are two suggested approaches to this activity: one includes a written report, the other a chart. If you're a verbal learner, you'll probably feel more comfortable with a traditional written report. By contrast, if you're more visually oriented, the chart format will likely be more appealing.

Format 1: The Written Report

You may well be comfortable with a particular book-report format; what follows is simply one recommended plan. Your report should, however, cover all the elements contained in this format.

Book Report Format

- Title/Author
- Brief description of principal setting(s) – time, place, background circumstances
- Short descriptions of principal characters – at least protagonist and antagonist(s)
- Narrative point of view
- Description and classification of major conflict
- Simplified plot diagram containing these components:*
 - initial incident that gets things going
 - two or three significant events in rising action
 - climax or point of highest tension
 - resolution or **denouement**
- Your personal response to the novel (Here explain precisely what you think of the book you're reviewing – its strengths and weaknesses.)

Denouement:
the resolution or
working out of
the events in a
work of fiction

*Note that a novel is a much more complex literary work than a short story and that untangling threads of interrelated conflicts and events can be tricky. Do the best job you can; remember, the purpose of this exercise is to clarify things for yourself, not muddy them.

Format 2: The Point-form Chart

If you'd rather, fill in the following chart in point form.

Title and Author:		
Summary of Central Conflict:	Main Character's Personality Traits:	Importance of the Setting:
What the Conflict Reveals About the Main Character:	Narrative Point of View – and Reasons:	Unusual Features:
What the Novel Brings to Mind:		

2. It's often said that the best way to understand something is to have to teach it. Imagine that you're teaching your novel to an English 30 class.
 - a. Design **five** questions for your students that you think would get them really thinking about important or difficult aspects of your novel.
 - b. Now list the main ideas you'd expect to find in your students' responses to each question.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Extra Help.

Enrichment

Do **one** or **both** of the following:

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to **one** or **more** of the following:

1. Pick any character in your novel other than the narrator (if your novel is told from the omniscient perspective, this leaves all the characters open as possibilities). Next, pick an interesting event from the novel in which your chosen character was involved (or at least one he or she witnessed). Now recount that incident from this character's point of view, being faithful to the way he or she would have interpreted and expressed things. Perhaps your account could be in the form of a letter or diary entry. To make this project as interesting as possible, try to select a character unsympathetic to the protagonist.
2. Does the writer of your novel have a highly distinctive style of writing? (If you selected one of the older novels on the list, for instance, you might find the manner of writing highly formal and perhaps rather wordy compared to the styles of most modern writers.) If this is the case, try writing something (a letter? a diary entry? a note telling your parents you've taken the car and won't be back until the wee hours of the morning?) in a similar style. Have some fun with this.
3. Choose **two** characters who are alive at the end of your novel and project ten years into the future. Assume that the two characters meet and have a conversation about what's gone on in their lives in the intervening years. Write out their conversation in the form of a dialogue.

If you're interested in learning more about the novel as a genre, try to get hold of the videotape *The Novel*, produced by the Thomas Klise Company of New York. This forty-three-minute production, divided into three parts, will give you a good understanding of what a novel is, what types exist, and what the basic elements of novels are. Some of the novelists whose works are represented in the English 30 list are referred to in the discussion, among them Austen, Dickens, and Hemingway.

Conclusion

In Section 1 you've read your novel, made notes, responded personally, and done some preliminary critical thinking. In Section 2 you'll dig a bit deeper into your novel and engage in somewhat more serious literary criticism.

ASSIGNMENT

In your Assignment Booklet complete the assignment for this section.

SECTION

2

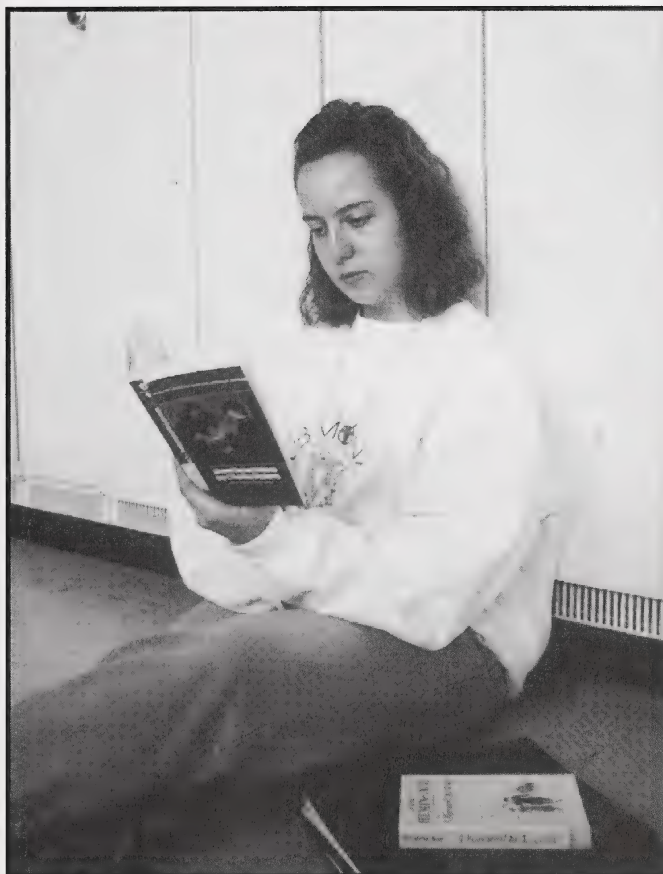
THINKING ABOUT
YOUR NOVEL

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Now that you've read your novel and done some preliminary thinking about it, are you ready to think about the novel a bit more seriously? In this section you'll get the chance to dig a little more deeply into the book you've read and investigate such aspects as character, theme, values, and style. You'll also be asked to evaluate the success of the writer of your novel in areas like these. Your Section 2 Assignment will test in particular your skills in assessing and appraising a work of literature.

Activity 1: Characters and Conflicts

Characters and Motivation



OK, now that everyone's finished reading, it's time to think a bit about the characters in your novels. What did you think of the protagonists in the books you read?

Personally, I thought the guy in The Mosquito Coast was a real jerk. I mean, he was this complete egotist who thought he knew it all and wouldn't listen to anybody else.



I had sort of the same problem; I read The Stone Angel and I couldn't sympathize with my book's protagonist much either. She was this pig-headed old lady with a real nasty streak. I mean, she was pretty gutsy, and I guess she was brave, but she made it practically impossible for anyone to like her.

It sounds to me as if you two are still looking for that superhuman protagonist that you encounter regularly in escape literature. Remember, interpretive works try to show us reality, and the reality is that human beings are flawed creatures. What you should be asking yourself is whether your protagonist is a believable human being. You should also be asking whether watching your protagonist function can give you any insights into human life.



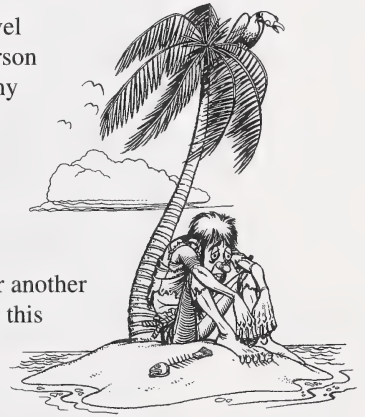
WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

Describe your own thoughts and feelings about the protagonist in the novel you've read. Did you find this person likable? admirable? believable? interesting? Explain your response with references to the novel.

Now that you've done some thinking about the protagonist of your novel, it's time to take your analysis a bit deeper. Responding to the questions that follow should help you with your analysis.

1. a. Whether or not you found the protagonist in your novel interesting, clearly the writer of the novel felt this person interesting enough to write a book about. Suggest why the author likely was so intrigued by the book's main character(s).
- b. Why would readers (or some readers) find the main character(s) intriguing?
2. Think carefully about the behaviour of the protagonist (or another main character you found interesting). To what degree is this character plausible? In responding, consider questions like these:
 - What forces and ideas motivate the character?
 - Are these motivations sufficient to explain all the character's actions?
 - Is the character consistent throughout the novel? If there are major changes in his or her attitudes or behaviour, are they plausibly motivated?
 - Given that a novel is a work long enough to develop well-rounded, multi-faceted characters, does your novel develop the character in which you're interested sufficiently to make him or her seem lifelike?



As you'll remember from Module 2, writers can use direct and indirect methods of revealing character. Good writers tend to rely principally on indirect methods of development; it's far more telling to watch characters in action than it is to be told what they're like. When good writers do choose to comment on the personalities of their characters, they often do so through the eyes of other characters who will generally see things from their own limited perspectives, leaving it up to readers to figure out just how much they should take at face value.

3. Bearing these facts in mind, how successful did you find the writer of your novel to be in revealing the personalities of the principal character(s)? What could have been done differently to improve character development in the book?

In thinking about a character from a work of literature, it can sometimes help to make comparisons (and contrasts) with a character from another work.

4. Think of a character from any work of literature you've already read in this course with whom an interesting comparison could be made with the protagonist of your novel. Then copy and complete the chart that follows.

Protagonist of Novel: _____ Character from Another Work: _____	
Similarities	
Differences	

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 1.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Select from your novel a minor character whose role was so limited the writer developed him or her only into a typically “flat” character. Now imagine you’re the writer and your publisher has asked that you develop this person into a more fully developed “round” character. In two or three paragraphs develop this character more fully, suggesting such things as background, personality traits, motivations, values, goals, relationships, and conflicts.

Conflicts

A short story typically contains one conflict. While others may be hinted at, they’ll generally be left so undeveloped as to be of little importance to the story as a whole. A novel, however, is a very different genre; while there’s bound to be one principal conflict, there are frequently a number of reasonably well-developed secondary ones that add richness to the work and make for a closer approximation to the complexities of real life.



I know what you mean. In my novel – Wuthering Heights – there are all these characters and they all have their own problems and conflicts. Some work them out, and others don't. It gets a bit complicated, but it is a lot like real life and it keeps things interesting.

5. a. Take a few minutes and do some brainstorming. Try to come up with a list of as many different conflicts as you can that are experienced by the different characters in your novel.
- b. Now classify each of the conflicts as internal or external. Would you classify any of the internal conflicts as dilemmas? Why or why not?
- c. Having thought about the various conflicts in your novel, which seem to you to be the most important ones – the internal or external conflicts? Explain your ideas with references to the book itself.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 1.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to **one** or **both** of the following:

1. Did any of the conflicts in your novel remind you of a situation you've experienced in your own life? If so, describe the situation and explain how you resolved it. Were you satisfied with the result?
2. Describe another novel or movie that presented a conflict similar to one in your novel. In that work how was the conflict resolved? Which of the works do you prefer – this novel or the other work? Why?

Activity 2: Themes and Values

What Does the Book Have to Say?



When you were studying short stories in Module 2, you spent some time looking at the themes or insights into life the stories had to offer their readers. Even in the case of so concise and uncluttered a genre as the short story you no doubt found that isolating and articulating themes can be a difficult business; all but the simplest stories can admit of a variety of interpretations and offer up insights into life that seem to go deeper the more you think about them. In the case of novels, as you might expect, the situation can get a good deal more complex.



But Ms. Jensen, I don't think that's true of my novel. It's got such an obvious message it's practically preaching at the reader. Even the title refers directly to the book's theme – Pride and Prejudice.

Good point. Just because a book is long, it doesn't mean that its theme is profound. A short story like "Boys and Girls" may, for example, have a more complex theme than a novel of several hundred pages. But a well-written interpretive novel can reveal so much more about human life that even if the theme seems obvious at first glance, you'll probably discover that it has a lot more to say if you dig a bit deeper. Just the way a novel reveals people interacting, for instance, can tell an active reader a tremendous amount about the writer's ideas on human relationships. I think that's true of your novel, Rico, even if its principal message is a bit moralistic.



Because novels give writers such scope for developing and conveying their ideas on a wide variety of topics, it's not always easy to simply say, "The theme of this novel is. . . ." In one novel an author can express views on many aspects of the human experience – love, death, aging, war, hope, family relationships, and on and on. Almost always there will be one overriding insight into some aspect of life, but there are bound to be many more observations – both deliberate and unintentional – for a discerning reader to note.

1. What subjects relating to human life does your novel explore? Use brainstorming or webbing to come up with a list of ideas.
2. Now try in a sentence or two to express the author's ideas on each of the subjects you listed in question 1.
3. Having thought about the various things your novel has to say about the human condition, try to express the book's central, unifying, insight into life – that is, its theme. The novel's title may or may not give you some direction in isolating and enunciating its unifying concept.



Ms. Jensen, I don't have any problem figuring out what my novel has to say, but I do have a problem accepting it. I mean, it's a well-written book, I guess, but it isn't really fair in the way it makes the world look. It sort of distorts reality, if you know what I mean.

Good point, Katrin, and that's what comes next – your own evaluation of your novel's theme.



4. In a paragraph or two, express your views on the central insight into life of your novel. Is it truthful? Does your book give an honest portrayal of life, or does it exaggerate a bit in order to make a point? Try to be specific in your response; if you think your novel's theme isn't entirely faithful to the way things really are, show just where and how it goes wrong.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.

The Writer's Values

Closely related to the novel's themes are the values reflected in those themes. Within any novel different characters clearly hold different values, and these values are revealed in what the characters say and how they behave.

5. Select a major decision made or action taken by the protagonist of your novel. Explain briefly what it was your protagonist did or decided and what factors led up to this response. Then, in a paragraph or two, explain what that response at this key moment reveals about the protagonist's outlook on life.

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.

Of course in some cases a character's values will reflect those of the writer of the novel, but this is by no means something a reader can take for granted. A discerning reader has to be able to assess the value positions of the various characters and determine the values of the writer that underlie the novel itself.



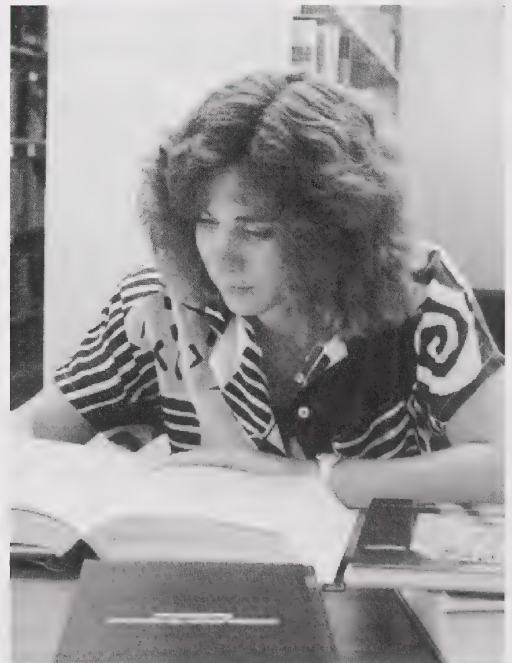
*I know what you mean about characters' values not necessarily reflecting those of the writer. I read *The Mosquito Coast*, and at first I thought the values of the protagonist – the father – were exactly the same as the writer's. But the more I read, the more I realized that it wasn't that simple. I mean, the author doesn't entirely disagree, but he makes it clear that things aren't as black and white as the protagonist thinks.*

6. Select **two** major characters from your novel and list **two or three** important values held by each of them.
7. Do either of the characters undergo a change in values during the course of the novel? If so, explain how and why?
8. What does the novel suggest about the writer's own values? How do the protagonist's values reflect those of the writer?
9. Do you share any of the values reflected in the novel? Explain your response.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.

In Section 1: Activity 1 you were given the option of doing some research into the life of the author of your novel either before or after reading the book. If you opted to dig into the background of your novelist before reading, your understanding of the novel was probably somewhat affected by what you learned. If you haven't yet explored your writer's life, it's time to do so now.

10. Using the resources suggested in Activity 1 of Section 1 and/or any other resources you can find (remember to ask help from your librarian if necessary), research the life of the author of your novel. When you've done this, explain what you've learned about how the writer's life and times (that is, the writer's milieu) likely affected his or her values and way of seeing the world. Describe how the writer's milieu is reflected in the novel you read.

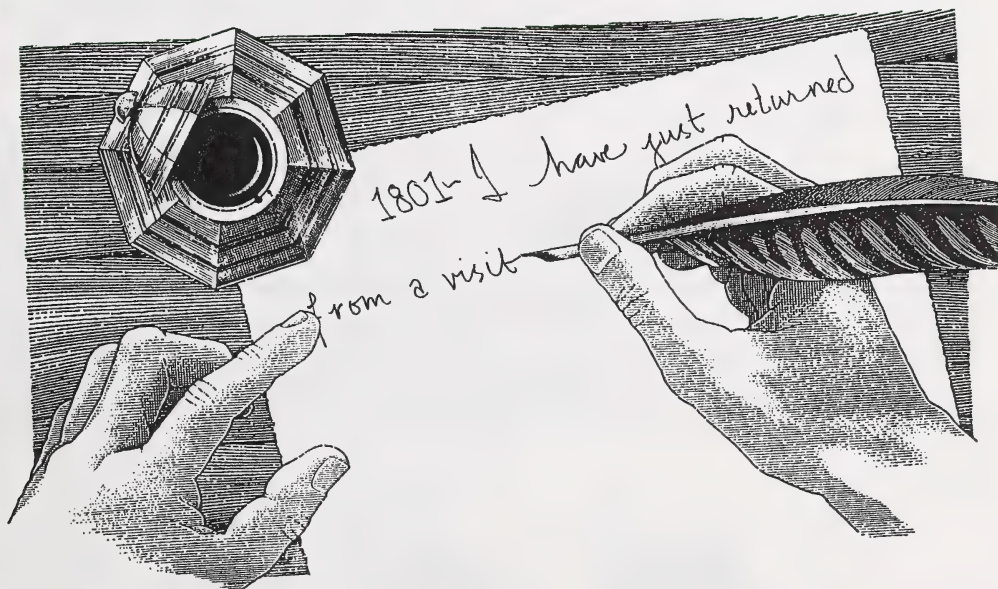


Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following:

You were given the choice of when to research the life of your novelist. How do you think the timing of your research affected your response to and understanding of the book? Do you wish you'd done things differently? Explain your ideas.

Activity 3: Style, Purpose, and Artistic Unity**Style**

Though up to this point the style in which your novel is written hasn't been explicitly discussed (except in an optional Enrichment question in Section 1), you have been asked to think about various stylistic concerns. You were asked, for example, to comment on the mood evoked by the opening chapter(s) and to think about the tone the writer adopts toward his or her subject matter. You've also been asked to look out for interesting wordings and to comment on unusually effective passages as well as on the writer's use of irony. Questions like these should have got you thinking of the writer's style while you were reading the novel.

If you feel a bit rusty in the area of style in writing, take a few minutes now and review the relevant material in Module 3. Then answer the questions that follow.

1. How would you describe the writer's style in the novel you've read? Remember to consider such factors as level of language, diction, tone, rhythm, paragraphing, and so on.
2. Would you call the novel's style memorable or distinctive? Explain why or why not.
3. You've been asked to note interesting wordings that you've encountered in your novel. Choose a passage that you think typifies your writer's style and use it to illustrate your responses to questions 1 and 2.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.

Purpose



Of course closely related to the matter of style is the author's purpose. The style a writer uses depends to a large degree on why he or she is writing, and for what audience.

Illustration, please?

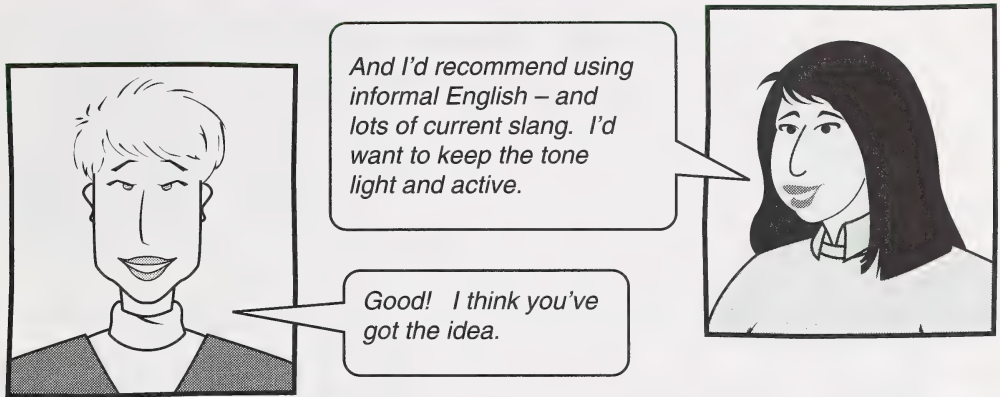
OK. Let's take an obvious example. Suppose you were writing an adventure novel for young readers. What sort of style would you adopt?



Well, I guess I'd use a lot of short, easy-to-read words – to sort of keep the pace up and not to sound too...too academic.



And I'd use short sentences, too. It'd be hard to maintain a feeling of action with long, complicated sentences.



4. Did you find the style in which your novel was written to be appropriate to the writer's purpose and audience? In your discussion, be sure to explain just what you take the purpose to have been and who the intended audience likely was.

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.

Artistic Unity

Analysing a literary work to see if its style is appropriate for its audience and purpose leads naturally into the question of its artistic unity. As you'll remember from Modules 1 and 2, when all the elements of an artistic creation work in harmony to create a unified effect, the work can be said to have artistic unity. Conversely, if, for example, a style of writing clashes with the mood a writer wants to create, or if the content – the plot – is inappropriate to convey the intended theme, the work lacks the quality of artistic unity.



5. If necessary, do a quick review of the concept of artistic unity in Modules 1 and 2 (Section 3 in both cases); then assess your novel for the degree to which it achieves this quality. Consider how well aspects like the following enhance or detract from the purpose and overall effect of the novel:

- plot
- point of view
- setting
- structure and organizing principle
- characters
- style
- tone
- theme

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.



One thing you haven't talked about, Ms. Jensen, is symbolism. I think I've noticed some really good symbolism in my novel and I'm dying to mention it somewhere. Should I have discussed it when talking about the writer's style?

Certainly. Symbolism is a stylistic device writers can use to help convey and intensify their concepts and insights. And like any such device, you may or may not conclude that a particular symbol works well to enhance the writer's purpose. Perhaps you think it's rather obscure or, conversely, laid on a bit too thick. What symbolism did you notice in your novel, by the way?



I was hoping you'd ask! My novel is The Grapes Of Wrath. It's about this poor family in the Great Depression who pack everything they own onto their car and leave Oklahoma for California in hopes of finding work. Anyway, right near the beginning there's this short chapter that seems totally unrelated to the story; it describes a turtle slowly crossing a highway and not letting anything stop it. Then it occurred to me: the turtle symbolizes the family. Just like them it carries its home along with it, and it's determined to reach its goal no matter how long it takes and what obstacles it has to overcome.



I think I picked out a symbol right in the title of my novel. It's The Stone Angel by Margaret Laurence, and it's about this cantankerous old woman who won't let anybody get close to her; but underneath it all you can see that she really has these good qualities. The stone angel in the title supposedly is a statue in the town, but I think it sort of symbolizes the old lady, too.



*My title is symbolic too, I think. I read *Windflower*, and I couldn't figure out what the title referred to till I read the last two paragraphs. Then I got the symbolic meaning, and it all made sense. I think the river may have symbolic meaning too.*

*I read *Mizzly Fitch*. It's got lots of religious symbolism, I think – like this guy on a boat saving everyone's life by having himself tied to the mast and holding out his arms to hold a sail. I think it's sort of like Jesus on the cross.*



6. Did you pick out any symbolism in your novel? Did you notice the use of recurring motifs? If you did, explain them and tell to what degree you found them effective in helping the writer achieve his or her purposes. (Note: If you're having trouble, a good place to look first is your novel's title. Titles like *The Bean Trees*, *Davita's Harp*, and *The Stone Angel* should alert you to the fact that the things they refer to could well have symbolic value.)

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.

Follow-up Activities

If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

Extra Help

Activity 2 of this section looked at themes and values in the novel you read. Because novels are such lengthy works, they can, of course, do far more than simply illustrate one insight into life; most interpretive novels, in fact, say a great many things about a great many aspects of the human experience.

1. Following is a list of nine thematic topics about which many works of literature have something to say.

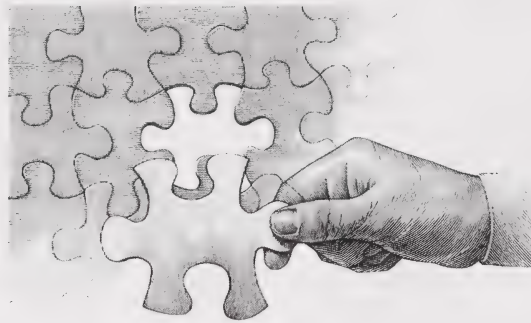
- alienation
- reality and illusion
- hope
- pursuit of dreams
- family
- generation gap
- aging/death
- response to conflict
- success

Choose **two** topics from this list that can be related to your novel; for each one

- express what the novel has to say about it in a statement of theme
- explain in a paragraph or two how the novel reveals that theme

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Extra Help.

The last thing discussed in Activity 3 was the concept of artistic unity. This was kept to the end of Section 2 because it brings together all the aspects of a work of literature; when you analyse a work for its artistic unity, you have to consider how everything works together – or doesn't work together – to contribute to the realization of the writer's purposes. If you find the concept of artistic unity difficult, the following discussion might help; it takes a slightly different approach to the matter.



When a work achieves artistic unity, everything fits together.

The first thing to do when you start thinking about a work's unity is to consider the writer's purposes. One of these will invariably be to entertain readers; if they aren't entertained, they won't read the work at all. In a more serious work of literature – that is, an interpretive work – another purpose will be to convey the writer's thoughts on some aspect or aspects of life and the human experience. At this point, then, you should start asking what the writer is trying to say – in other words, what the work's theme or themes are.

Once you've determined what ideas the writer hopes to leave with his or her audience, you can start looking at various aspects of the work to see to what degree they contribute to the conveyance of these ideas. How does the narrative point of view help develop the work's theme(s)? How do the elements of character, plot (and its conflicts), and setting work toward communicating the writer's ideas? How does the writer's style – diction, level of language, figures of speech, and so on – contribute? Does the writer use devices like symbolism and irony? Do such devices contribute to his or her purposes, or do they tend to muddy things? Are the writer's tone and the mood created in the work consistent with the piece's theme?

2. Think of your novel and answer each of the following questions. This is a rather mechanical approach to the issue of artistic unity; but if you're having trouble, it may help you sort out your thoughts.
 - a. What important ideas or insight(s) into life does the writer of your novel hope to leave with readers?

- b. Explain how the narrative point of view contributes to (or detracts from) the communication of these insights.
- c. How does the central conflict of the novel help develop the writer's ideas?
- d. To what degree do the novel's principal characters contribute to the development of the writer's insights?

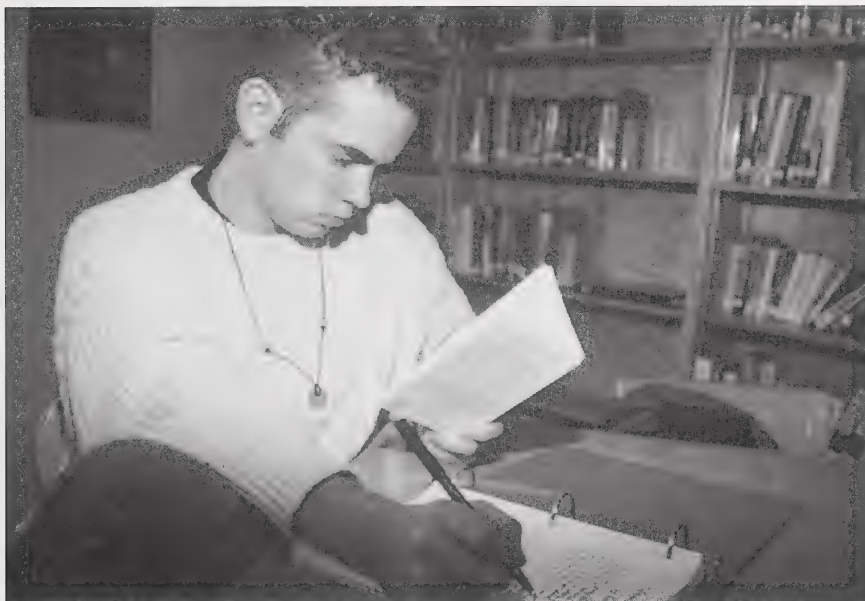


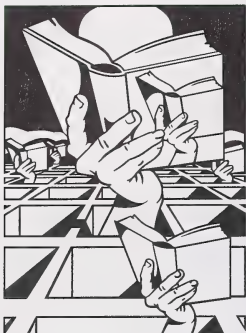
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- e. How does the novel's setting help develop the book's ideas?
- f. Describe the writer's style. Is it consistent with his or her purpose (the development and conveyance of the novel's insights into life)? Explain why or why not.
- g. Describe the novel's chief mood and the writer's tone. To what degree do they contribute to his or her purposes?
- h. Is symbolism used? Does it contribute to the development of the novel's ideas? Explain.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Extra Help.

Now that you've sorted out to what degree various aspects of the novel work together to achieve the writer's purposes, you're well positioned to discuss the artistic unity of your novel in a more integrated format – perhaps an essay or a response to an essay-type exam question. When it comes to presenting your ideas in that sort of format, always remember to defend your assertions with specific references to the literature you're discussing.

Enrichment



While one of the chief goals of this module is to increase your understanding of the novel as a genre along with your ability to read lengthy interpretive works actively and critically, an equally important objective is to help increase the enjoyment you take from reading good novels and, perhaps, to expand your awareness of the extraordinary range of novels out there just waiting to be read. If you don't read novels frequently, or if you're stuck in a rut with your reading – always selecting science fiction or romances or murder mysteries, for example – why not make it one of your own goals to expand your reading horizons?

If you enjoyed reading your English 30 novel, you might consider beginning by reading more works by the same author. The fiction section of your local library should be arranged alphabetically by author, so it shouldn't be difficult to locate more books. Another idea would be to return to the list of novels given you in Section 1: Activity 1 and choose another. These works were all carefully selected for English 30 students; and though that's no guarantee that you'll like them all, it does mean that they'll have more to offer you than escape and simple entertainment.

Of course you might just want to talk to people whose opinions on such matters you respect and get their recommendations on novels they've enjoyed; or perhaps you already have in mind several titles you've been meaning to look into for some time but just haven't got around to it. And while current best-seller lists can tell you only what people are buying, not what's worth reading, they may prove useful at times in helping you discover recent novels that are enjoying better-than-average success.

Whatever approach you choose, it might be helpful to make yourself up a reading list of novels you'd like to tackle. Keep the list open-ended, and add titles as they occur to you while deleting those you read or find to be not to your taste. If you make this a habit, you should manage to provide yourself with many hours of pleasure and personal development.

Conclusion

In Section 1 you read your chosen novel and responded to it personally and critically. In Section 2 you've looked at your novel somewhat more closely from the points of view of character, plot, theme, values, style, purpose, and artistic unity. At this point you should be thoroughly familiar with the work and prepared to engage in responses of a more complex nature – something you'll be doing in Section 3.

ASSIGNMENT

In your Assignment Booklet complete the assignment for this section.

SECTION

3

THE NOVEL – A FINAL
LOOK

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At this point you've read your novel and done some serious thinking about it. You'll begin this final section by reconsidering the work's opening chapter(s) from the vantage point you've gained from your work in the first two sections. Then you'll be asked to create a personal response to the book that's perhaps rather more challenging than the ones you've done up to now. The section will end with a critical essay in which you'll be comparing aspects of the novel you've read to other literature you've encountered in English 30. Your Section 3 Assignment will test your ability to compare works of literature and respond creatively to a major personal-response question; if you've worked through the module faithfully, most of your assignment will be completed by the time you've finished the last activity.

Activity 1: Reconsidering the Opening Chapter(s)



When I was doing the work on artistic unity in Section 2, I ended up rereading some parts of my novel. It's really amazing what you can get out of a book when you go back and read it again. I mean, there were all these hints and references that don't really mean much to you until you know what comes later; but when you do know how things develop, they jump right out at you.

That's a very true observation, Sue. The fact is that a well-written work of literature really deserves to be read several times; with each reading it will say things to you that you missed the first time through.



Oh-oh! You aren't going to ask us to reread the whole novel, are you, Ms. Jensen?



Only if you really want to, Wes, though I do recommend it for some time in the future. Right now all I want you to do is reread your novel's opening to see how much more meaningful it is the second time around.



Go back to your novel and reread the chapter or chapters you read in Section 1: Activity 1. As you read, be alert to ways in which these pages strike you differently from how they did on your initial reading. Pay particular attention to how such things as characters, setting, conflicts, and themes are introduced.

1. Did you note any significant details on your second reading that meant little to you the first time through? If so, identify them and explain their significance.
2. Now that you know what comes later, what foreshadowing do you see in these early chapters?

3. a. Are any important motifs and/or symbols introduced near the beginning of the novel? If so, identify them?
- b. Were you aware of the importance of these motifs and symbols after your first reading of the novel's opening?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 1.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing folder respond to **one** or **both** of the following ideas.

1. Reread your responses to the questions and Writing Folder exercise in Section 1: Activity 2. Compare your feelings about your novel's opening chapter(s) now to your original reaction. How do they differ? What did you gain from a second reading?
2. Compare the predictions you made when first beginning the novel with the way things turned out. How accurate were they? After rereading the book's opening, do you feel that your original presumptions were justified, or were you missing things that you really should have picked up on? Explain your response.

It's unlikely that at this point you'll have the time or the desire to reread your novel. But if you enjoyed the book, why not pick it up again at some time in the future and read the whole thing again? You may be very surprised at how much more you get out of it the second time around.

Activity 2: Writing a Personal Response



In answering questions, responding to Writing Folder ideas, and completing your assignments, you've engaged in a good deal of critical and personal writing already in this module. In the final two activities of this section you'll get the chance to do more of this sort of thing but in a rather more elaborate fashion. Activity 3 will focus on the writing of critical essays while Activity 2 will involve the production of a personal response of a more imaginative, challenging type than most others you've been asked to do.



I don't get it. You mean we're going to have to describe our feelings about our novels at even greater length?

Not exactly. What we want you to do here is to use your reaction to your novel – along with the thinking you've been doing about it – as a springboard to a personal creation of your own. This will be explained in what follows.



What you'll be doing in this activity is something for your Writing Folder, though it won't be set up like a usual Writing Folder exercise because of its length. The nature of what you choose to do will be left pretty much up to you, as long as it's creative and is related to, or inspired by, your novel. What you have to do is simply think about some aspect of your novel that you found particularly meaningful, decide on a focus and format for developing that aspect in some way, and set to work to develop your creative response. Though the way you choose to respond is up to you, here are a few ideas to consider if you're having trouble getting started:

- Choose one or more characters from the novel and write two or three poems from their perspectives. Your poems can deal with their feelings about specific events or situations in the novel or can simply comment on some aspect of life as they'd see it. The poetry-writing skills you worked on in Module 4 should come in handy if you opt for this idea; and it will give you good practice in adopting the personas of different characters.
- Take an incident from the novel that the writer only referred to or left largely undeveloped and develop it yourself into a **short short story** that can stand on its own. Try, in your story, to match the novelist's tone and style and to keep characters consistent with their portrayals in the novel.
- Write a series of letters between two characters's or one character's diary entries for days on which significant events occurred. Be sure to stay in character and to see and explain things as that person (or those persons) would.
- Imagine that at the novel's end one character – not necessarily the protagonist unless this seems appropriate – is put on trial by the other characters. Put yourself first in the role of the prosecuting lawyer and write your final address to the jury; then do the same from the perspective of the lawyer for the defence. Finally, be the judge and jury and decide on the character's guilt or innocence. Be sure to explain your reasons.

Short short story: a work of prose fiction even more compressed than a short story – usually from 500 to 1500 words



- Imagine that you're about to write and direct a movie version of the novel you've read. Now do the following:



- Explain what professional actors you'd hire to play the leading roles and why.
 - Choose an interesting scene from the book and explain how you'd shoot it. In your explanation discuss such things as costuming, music, lighting, camera angles and techniques. (Examples of these would be close-up, long shots, zoom-ins and zoom-outs, pans, high-angle shots, low-angle shots, and so on. See your librarian or a teacher knowledgeable about film if necessary.)
 - Write a set of director's notes to the actors involved in the scene explaining what you hope to accomplish in it – mood, tension, character development, conflict development, and so on.
- If anything about the novel reminded you of a significant experience from your own life or the life of someone you know, recount that experience in the form of a short short story. Try to bring the event and its significance to life. Don't just recount what occurred as if it were a factual report; try to make it an interesting narrative complete with dialogue, character development, conflict, and theme.

Remember that you aren't limited to one of these ideas; they're meant only as suggestions to get your creative juices flowing. As you work, have in mind a clear idea of your purpose and intended audience.

Now set to work on your extended personal response to the novel you've read. Take the time you need to do a good job; you'll be asked to submit a finished copy of your work as part of your Section 3 Assignment.

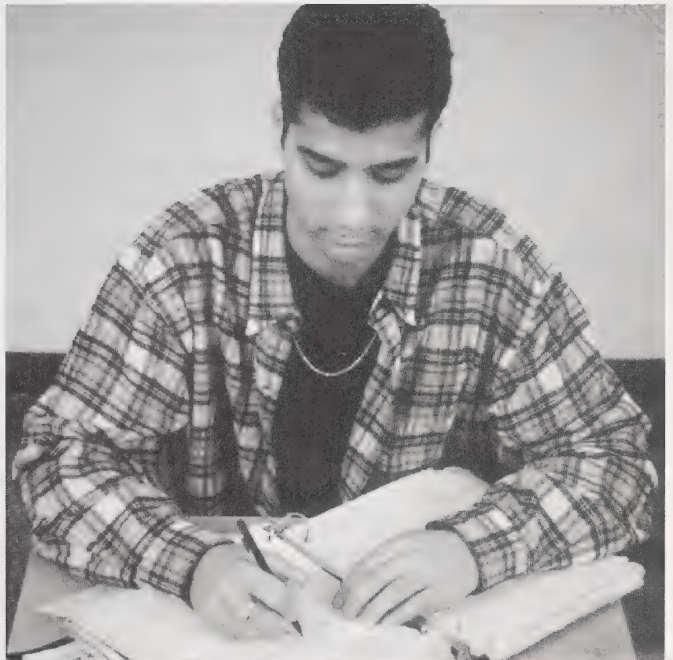


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Activity 3: A Comparative Essay



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In Section 3 of Module 2, when you were studying short stories, you finished up with a brief look at comparing works of literature. At that time you completed charts in which you compared and contrasted two short stories according to criteria such as plot, tone, and theme; you then went on to do similar comparisons of characters from two short stories – or within the same story – looking at such aspects of character as motivation, values, strengths, and weaknesses.

Being able to make comparisons in this way between two or more works of literature, and across different literary genres, is a skill you should possess. It's important to be able to think about a work of literature, analyse it, and then synthesize your ideas – that is, combine them with others – so as to be able to see relationships that might at first not have been entirely obvious.

In Module 2 you worked with charts in comparing and contrasting short stories; in this module you'll be taking the process a step further and developing your ideas into a short critical essay. This really won't be anything new; the term was introduced in Module 2 and you've been writing critical responses to the literature you've been reading throughout the course. Up till now, though, you haven't been doing much of the sort of comparative critique that you'll be undertaking here. Like any critical work, your comparative essay must have an explicit thesis defended by reasoned arguments supported by direct references to the works you're critiquing, and it should be presented in a precise, formal or semi-formal manner. The classic vase-shaped structure works well for most essays of literary criticism – a one-paragraph introduction, a body of three-to-five paragraphs, each one developing a separate point, and a one-paragraph conclusion. Many confident writers, however, choose to adapt this structure in order to create more lively, interesting pieces of writing. Because critical essays fall toward the formal, expository end of the scale, though, clarity and organization take precedence over novelty of expression.

One of your Section 3 assignments will be to write a brief critical essay in which you compare some aspect of your novel with one or more other works of literature; for the remainder of this activity, you'll be working on this project. When you've finished it, that part of your assignment will be pretty-well done.

Because there's such a wide choice of novels, it's impossible to assign specific topics for this short essay; so the first thing you're going to have to do is come up with a thesis to explain and defend. That will involve thinking about aspects of your novel that you've found interesting, then going back and revisiting works of literature you've studied in earlier modules that invite comparison in this area. Making charts like those you constructed in the last activity in Module 2 should help you organize your ideas. If you simply can't come up with any grounds for meaningful comparisons and contrasts with other literature in this course, you may compare your novel to works of literature you've read elsewhere; but do try to use English 30 selections if possible.



That's a tall order, Ms. Jensen. I can usually write a decent essay when I've been given the topic, but coming up with a comparison out of the blue that way's going to be tricky.

Oh, I don't think you'll find it all that hard to get ideas once you get going, Rico. Remember to use prewriting strategies like webbing, brainstorming, and freewriting; they'll help get the creative juices flowing. The discussion that follows should help too.



Remember that the grounds for your comparison are wide open; it's up to you to decide how to tackle this question, as long as you approach it as a serious literary critique. You can, for example, focus on the themes of two or more works in which you see grounds for comparison – or on underlying values. Or, you might compare and contrast two or more characters from different works, or two or more authors' methods of characterization. Comparing the styles of two or more writers, or their use of devices such as symbolism or irony, can make for an interesting comparison too.

Here are a few theses English 30 students have come up with in response to this assignment (though some of the original wordings have been improved upon). If any of them are based on the novel you've read, you may or may not find that you agree with them. None of them may work for your novel, but they might help you formulate your own thesis.

- In their works *Death of a Salesman* and *The Mosquito Coast*, writers Arthur Miller and Paul Theroux show how a father's obsession with a dream can devastate his family. Theroux's work, however, is a harsher attack on the so-called "American Dream."
- Both Jane Austen in her novel *Pride and Prejudice* and Nadine Gordimer in the short story "Happy Event" explore the issue of human prejudice. However, whereas Austen just scratches the surface of this dreadful source of suffering, Gordimer is much more honest in her treatment of it.
- The novel *The Stone Angel* and the story "The Bear" are both commentaries on the difficulties sometimes brought on by old age and a loss of independence. Both works rely heavily on symbolism, and both give an honest, unsentimental portrayal of what it can mean to be old.
- In both Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *The Outsider* by Albert Camus, the protagonists are individuals who are somehow isolated from the people around them. Shakespeare, however, is more honest than Camus in his depiction of human nature.
- *Mizzly Fitch* and "The First Born Son" are both works in which a son comes into conflict with the plans a parent has for him, but Ernest Buckler's omniscient perspective enables him to give a fuller, more revealing portrayal of a parent-child conflict.
- While the subjects of Gabrielle Roy's short stories "The Dead Child" and "The Story of Nil" and her novel *Windflower* are very different, the underlying values and attitudes of the writer, her emphasis on topics like devoted motherhood and the natural way of life, and her sensitive, understated portrayal of human suffering create works remarkably similar in mood, tone, and theme.
- Alice Munro's "Boys and Girls" and *Davita's Harp* by Chaim Potok are both stories about girls coming of age in difficult environments. Though these are very different works, the difficulties faced by their protagonists – and the conventions and traditions they must deal with – make for some remarkable parallels.
- While Arthur Miller in his play *Death of a Salesman* shows how an emphasis on material prosperity can lead to personal disaster, Barbara Kingsolver, in her novel *The Bean Trees*, shows the other side of the coin – how concentrating on human values and personal responsibility can lead to happiness and a sense of fulfilment.



1. Take the time now to formulate a thesis or controlling idea for your essay. Write out your working thesis statement. (Note that as a "working" thesis statement, it need not be repeated precisely in this fashion in your essay.)
2. Now complete the prewriting process by generating the ideas you'll use to defend your thesis and organizing them into a workable outline. Be sure to select details that exemplify your points from the literature with which you'll be dealing.

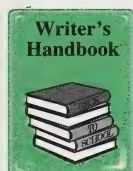
- At this point it's time to write the first draft of your essay. Be sure it has a clearly worded introduction, a unified and coherent body, and a conclusion that refers back to your thesis. If necessary, review the material in earlier modules – notably Module 3 – on how to structure an essay.



Ms. Jensen, I want to bring in some of the things I researched about the writer of my novel in Section 2. I suppose if I do that I have to use footnotes and include a bibliography and all that stuff, don't I?



That's right, Marie. This assignment isn't intended as a research project, but if you do have material you'd like to incorporate, it's important that you do it correctly. In fact, whenever you quote directly from the works you're using, you should footnote them.



You've probably learned in past English courses all about incorporating researched material into your writing. If this is something you feel unsure about, however, do consult your writer's handbook. As well, the Extra Help for this section offers some direction in this area; be sure to do this activity if you experience difficulties with things like quoting sources, paraphrasing, footnoting, and creating bibliographies.

- When you've finished the first draft of your essay, it's time for the revision process. Be sure to take all the time you need to revise (or rewrite?) your essay. After that, write out a clean copy. When it's been properly edited and proofread, you'll be ready to produce the final copy for your assignment.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.

Follow-up Activities

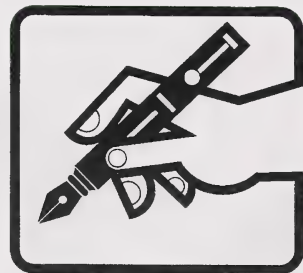
If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

Extra Help

Documenting Your Sources



In Activity 3 you wrote a short critical essay. Though this wasn't intended as a research paper, you may well have included researched material and/or direct quotations from the literary works you were comparing. If so, it's important that you correctly document your sources. If this is something that gives you trouble, be sure to work through this activity; it should help you improve the quality of your essay before you submit it for a grading as part of your Section 3 Assignment.



Plagiarize: pass off the words or ideas of someone else as your own

To document a source is to acknowledge by means of a footnote or an in-text citation (a term that will be explained shortly) where you obtained a piece of information. It's important to document sources adequately to avoid plagiarizing another writer's work. To **plagiarize**, as you probably know, is to steal someone else's words or ideas and make them look as if they're your own. Sometimes students are guilty of deliberate plagiarism when they try to fool a teacher or professor into believing that they've written what they've only copied from somewhere else; more often, though, students commit plagiarism by accident when they fail to use footnotes properly.

You must acknowledge your sources in two separate situations:

- when you borrow another writer's words either by direct quotation or by sticking to the style and manner of presentation of another writer (The only exception occurs when you use a widely known quotation – for example, “To be, or not to be.”)
- when you present facts and ideas that cannot be considered common knowledge



Your handbook likely has a section explaining in some detail when it's appropriate to acknowledge your sources. Locate this material now (check under “Footnotes” in the index) and read it. Remember that although common knowledge is the basic criterion for determining when and when not to footnote ideas, determining just what is common knowledge can be difficult. If you're in doubt, always footnote.

Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing

Even if you know how to document your sources properly, however, you may have trouble knowing just how to insert the information you've gathered into an essay or research paper. Have you ever made notes verbatim (word for word) from a source and then just transferred them into the piece you're writing? If so, you've been plagiarizing, whether you meant to or not.

If you learn to take notes in a proper note form, in which you just jot down ideas rather than exact wordings, you'll be forced to translate the information you research into your own words; and one problem will be solved. Direct quotations, as well as summaries and paraphrases of passages from other writers are, however, sometimes perfectly appropriate; and then the difficulty simply recurs.

To master this situation, you must possess three skills: the abilities to quote, to paraphrase, and to summarize properly and with correct documentation.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrase:
put a piece of
writing into your
own words
without
changing its
content or
shortening it

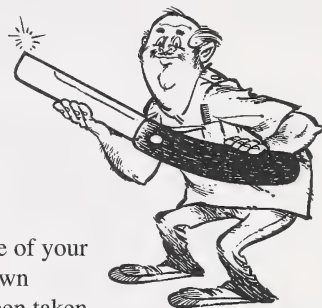
When you **paraphrase** a piece of writing, you put it into your own words without altering its content and usually without significantly shortening it. This technique allows you to use information taken from your sources without relying too much on quotation.

Summarizing

Summarize:
condense a piece
of writing to its
basic essentials

To **summarize** is to do something different from paraphrasing. A summary is a condensation of a passage rather than a simple rewording of it. For this reason summarizing involves even more care than paraphrasing, for it's necessary to decide what's essential and should be retained in the summary and what's not essential and should be omitted. Like a paraphrase, a summary is written in your own words.

Whenever you paraphrase or summarize a passage taken from one of your sources, you must document it. Even though you're using your own words, the ideas themselves, expressed together as a unit, have been taken from another writer; and as such the debt to that writer must be formally acknowledged.



Quoting Directly

Quoting directly from a source should occur far less often than summarizing or paraphrasing, and sometimes students will put too many direct quotations into their papers. There are a number of reasons for this. One is that when dealing with a difficult or unfamiliar topic, students often feel safer using the words of an authority than translating the ideas of the expert into their own words. A second reason is a tendency to be overly impressed by the writing style of the professionals, and a third is a lack of knowledge of proper note-taking procedures. Finally, a fourth reason is simple laziness; copying is easier than creating an original work.



*Yeah, I think I see a
bit of myself in all
those reasons; but
that last one is
definitely numero uno!*

If this tendency is one you see in yourself, you'll have to fight it, but of course at times it is desirable, and perfectly appropriate, to include direct quotations in an essay or research paper. The trick is to know when, and this is something for which you'll have to develop a feeling. As a rule you may quote directly from time to time when a writer makes a point so exceptionally clearly, interestingly, and succinctly that it deserves to be retained intact rather than paraphrased. And of course if you're pointing out interesting wordings and key passages from a literary work you're discussing, the only way to do it is with direct quotations.

There are two methods of presenting quoted material. The correct one to use depends on the size of the quotation.

- In the first method a short quotation is inserted into the body of the paragraph in which it occurs surrounded by quotation marks. Here's an example:

Marlene Symak argues that were Shakespeare alive today, "... he would not hesitate for a moment to incorporate into his writing the wealth of current slang expressions that are so scrupulously avoided by today's academic snobs."⁵

- Quotations two sentences or more in length require the second method. They should be single spaced, inset, and should appear with no quotation marks. Here's an example:

Marlene Symak puts the point well in her book *The Richness of English*:

If Shakespeare were alive today, he would not hesitate for a moment to incorporate into his writing the wealth of current slang expressions so scrupulously avoided by today's academic snobs. The wonderful richness of the English language is due, in large part, to our ability continuously to coin new expressions, which generally enter the language as slang. If we ignore slang, we render English sterile and barren.³

Two mistakes students frequently make when they incorporate quotations into their writing are failing to introduce a quotation properly and confusing directly quoted material with indirect quotations.

Introducing a Quotation:



Whenever you use a quotation, be sure to introduce it. This was done in the two preceding examples; in each case readers know that they're about to read something written by Marlene Symak, and the quotation fits neatly into the flow of the paragraph in which it occurs. Sometimes writers forget to do this, simply inserting a quotation into their own writing with no introduction. This leaves readers wondering what it is they're reading, and the composition becomes jerky and disjointed. Here's an example of this sort of thing:

Actually, Shakespeare used a great deal of sixteenth-century slang in his writings and would probably have enjoyed our own slang just as much. "If Shakespeare were alive today, he would not hesitate for a moment to incorporate into his writing the wealth of current slang expressions that are so scrupulously avoided by today's academic snobs."⁴

Do you see how this quotation fails to slip neatly into context?

Confusing Direct and Indirect Quotations:

Marlene Symak, in her book *The Richness of English*, says that “if Shakespeare were here today, he would use current slang expressions in his writings.”

Do you see the error in this sentence? The writer incorrectly used quotation marks to indicate an indirect quotation – actually a paraphrase of another writer’s ideas. Use quotation marks only for direct quotations, and then be sure you reproduce the quoted material exactly as it originally appeared, right down to punctuation marks.

Setting up Footnotes



Once you’ve decide that a source you’ve used must be documented, the next step is to set up your acknowledgement in a correct fashion. There are different ways of doing this, and the best place to turn for advice and sample acknowledgements is your handbook. It should provide you with examples of footnotes appropriate for material taken from a variety of sources – from books, periodicals, encyclopedias, and so on – along with samples of such things as footnotes for second references to the same work or for another work by the same author.

Traditionally, there have been two recommended systems of footnoting: for writings in the humanities – English courses, for instance – the system developed by the Modern Language Association is generally used, while in the social sciences, the American Psychological Association’s system is generally preferred. Today writers using either of these approaches can use in-text citations rather than footnotes to acknowledge their sources; this means putting references to works used right in the text itself, surrounded by parentheses. However, the traditional style of documentation for English courses, now often called the Old MLA style, involves the use of footnotes and a bibliography at the end of the paper. It’s this style that is used in the very brief outline that follows.

If you’re going to use the Old MLA style, here are some guidelines to follow:

- A number raised slightly above the line of text (a superscript number) indicates a footnote. It refers the reader to the footnote giving extra information at the bottom of the page (or the footnotes may be listed at the end of the paper preceding the bibliography).
- The footnote gives the source of a specific idea, fact, quotation, or judgement.
- Footnotes always appear in the order in which they occur on the page or in the paper and are numbered consecutively.
- The first line of a footnote is indented five spaces.

Here’s a sample first-reference footnote to a single book:

¹ John Marlyn, Under the Ribs of Death (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1964), pp. 57-58.

Setting up a Bibliography

A bibliography lists complete information about the sources that have been used for research in writing a paper. Here are some guidelines for constructing a bibliography:

- A bibliography always comes at the end of a paper.
- A bibliography lists the sources that have been used: books, magazines, people interviewed, and so on.
- Sources in the bibliography are listed in alphabetical order by the last name of the authors, or by title if no author is given.
- Each entry in the bibliography begins with the last name of the author (if the name of the author is given).
- All lines except the first line are indented five spaces.

Now here's a sample bibliographical entry for the same work footnoted above:

Marlyn, John. Under the Ribs of Death. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1964.



The important thing to keep in mind when writing footnotes and a bibliography is to be consistent. Refer to your own handbook for more examples and a much fuller discussion than can be given here.

1. Now, using your handbook, rewrite each acknowledgement listed below in correct footnote form.
 - a. Page 27 of Barbara Kingsolver's novel *The Bean Trees*, published by HarperCollins in New York in 1988
 - b. an unsigned article entitled "Hunger stalks children, says aid worker," appearing in *The Edmonton Journal* on October 3, 1994, on page 3 of Section A
 - c. An article entitled "The Hanseatic League," written by Edward Von Der Porten and appearing on page 56 of the October 1994 issue (Volume 186, Number 5) of *National Geographic*
 - d. an article called "Laurence, Margaret" by Clara Thomas, found in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Volume II, page 1181, published by Hurtig Publishers Ltd. of Edmonton in 1988
 - e. an article called "Liang Shu-ming," taken from *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, page 325, Volume 7, fifteenth edition
2. Now write a bibliography to go at the end of the paper in which you used the footnotes you wrote for question 1.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Extra Help.

Enrichment

Do **one** or **both** of the following.

1. If you enjoyed the extended personal response you created for Activity 2 of this section, go back to that activity and try another of the suggestions given there, or come up with another idea of your own. Work with a partner if you wish. If you're pleased with the results, you may substitute this response for your original one in Activity 2 for question 1 of your Section 3 Assignment in your Assignment Booklet.
2. Feature films have been made of a number of the novels on the English 30 list. Check your local video outlet to see if you can find one for the novel you've read. In some cases television miniseries have been made of the novels; and though you won't find these at a video store, you might catch one on the air if you keep an eye on the TV listings. If you do manage to get hold of a film version of your novel, watch it carefully and see what you think of the adaptation. As you watch, ask yourself questions like these:



- Were the actors who were chosen to play the lead roles well cast? Did the interpretations of the characters reflect your own feelings about them?
- Do you feel that the director's vision of the novel was faithful to the author's?
- Given that a film must ordinarily omit a great deal from the novel on which it's based, were you happy with what was cut out and what was left in?
- Were concessions made to popular tastes so as to appeal to a wider audience; for example, were additional romances or unnecessary scenes of violence included?
- Was the film faithful to the mood of the novel and the writer's tone?
- Was the ending sugarcoated, or was it left essentially as the writer wanted it?
- Do you feel that the director's ideas on the visual aspects of the movie were in keeping with the writer's intentions?
- Was music used? If so, was it appropriate? Did it enhance the film or did you find it a distraction?
- Do you think that the movie conveyed the writer's theme satisfactorily, or did it offer a simplified or distorted message about life?



Conclusion

In this section you've extended the work you've been doing with your novel to include a revisitation of the early chapters, a major personal response, and a comparative essay. If you've done this work, your Section 3 Assignment should pretty much take care of itself.

Assignment
Booklet

ASSIGNMENT

In your Assignment Booklet complete the assignment for this section.

MODULE SUMMARY



And that's it – the end of Module 7 and the end of the assigned literature for English 30. There's only one more module to go. In Module 8 you'll be developing your skills in the art of persuasian, putting together a writing portfolio, and preparing for your final test and diploma exam. It's a module with a practical slant, and one you should find very useful. But while practicality certainly has its place in life, so too do aesthetic pleasure and intellectual stimulation; so keep reading those novels!

Appendix



Glossary

Suggested Answers

Glossary

denouement: the resolution or working out of the events in a work of fiction

key quotation: a passage in a work of literature that is of unusual significance for character development, theme, or some other aspect of the work

novel: a lengthy work of prose fiction intended to offer pleasure and/or intellectual stimulation

paraphrase: put a piece of writing into your own words without changing its content or shortening it

plagiarize: pass off the words or ideas of someone else as your own

short short story: a work of prose fiction even more compressed than a short story – usually from 500 to 1500 words

summarize: condense a piece of writing to its basic essentials

Suggested Answers

Because of the wide selection of novels offered in this course, suggested answers to questions that are specific to the novel you are studying cannot be supplied. Therefore, most of the “answers” that follow will be of a general nature.

Section 1: Activity 1

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

Section 1: Activity 2

1. This question may be very easy to answer or rather complex, depending on the novel you’re reading. Some novels can be confusing at first, but things generally sort themselves out later on.
2. Be sure in answering this question that you take into account not only time and place, but also the situation.
3.
 - a. It’s important to get a good grip on the characters in a novel early on. Some novels – such as those by certain nineteenth-century Russian novelists, for example – can introduce readers to so complex a cast in the opening chapters that serious readers often find themselves forced to draw up lists of names. Make sure you get characters and their relationships sorted out before moving on.
 - b. It may not be clear at this stage who the protagonist will be. You might, for example, assume that the narrator will be telling his or her own story, only to discover later that this narrator is but a minor character recounting events that chiefly concern someone else.
4.
 - a. If you’re rusty on narrative point of view, go back and reread the discussion in Module 2, Section 2: Activity 1.
 - b. The benefits of using the different points of view – and their limitations – are discussed in Module 2. Apply this material to the specific novel you’re reading.
5. Don’t worry if it’s not yet apparent just what the major conflict will be. Remember that novels are lengthy and often very complex works with numerous conflicts. It can be instructive, though, to predict from the opening chapter(s) just how conflicts will develop. Doing this well can require well-developed inference-making skills.

6. Because they're long and complex works of fiction, novels can evoke a variety of moods. However, it's important that novelists hit just the right note at the start of their works because it's here that the initial impression is made on readers. Return to your response to this question when you've finished the book and see if the mood as you perceived it in the early chapters is continued throughout the novel.
7.
 - a. Remember in describing a fictional world to go beyond time, place, and situation. Describe, as well, any interesting and noteworthy qualities of that world. For example, the world into which Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* invites readers is one that seems dominated by an emphasis on manners, social relationships, and domestic concerns.
 - b. It's important that writers entice readers into their worlds early on or many simply won't make the effort necessary to get involved. To lure readers on, does the writer of your novel offer an exciting event? intriguing hints of things to come? fascinating descriptions? Are readers thrown right into the middle of the action (*in medias res*), or are they drawn in more subtly? Does the novel perhaps begin in the present and then use a flashback to describe earlier events?
 - c. Be honest here. If you find the fictional world unbelievable – or simply not very interesting – say so. But be sure to give solid reasons for your response.
8. Responses will be personal. Return later to what you wrote here to see if your questions were answered and your predictions borne out.

Section 1: Activity 3

1. Remember that key quotations are passages that have something important to say to the reader about one or more of the characters, the theme(s), or some other aspect of a work of literature. When you read a key quotation, a little (or not-so-little) light should flash on in your head and you should think "Aha! I understand better now!"
2. You've done a good deal of work on making inferences throughout this course, but this is the first time you've been asked to come up with your own passages from which the writer expects the reader to draw inferences. If you have a reading partner, discuss the inferences your partner draws from your passages and vice versa.
3. Be sure to use specific references to the novel in responding to this question. Be critical; don't just accept the behaviour of characters. Always ask yourself if this is the way real people would actually behave in this sort of situation.
4. *Interesting wordings* is a very broad category; it leaves it pretty well up to you to decide on what qualifies. Look for such things as colourful descriptive phrases, lively snippets of dialogue, and unusual word choices and juxtapositions that had an unusually strong impact on you when you first read them. Be sure to explain what it is about each one that makes it stand out for you.
5. By now you should have a firm grasp of the novel's central conflict. Note the word *central*; most novels have a number of conflicts going on at different levels and involving a variety of characters, as befits a lengthy work that tries to be faithful to the richness of human life and relationships. In most good, interpretive novels, the central conflict is likely to be something more complex than the person-versus-person or person-versus-environment type offered up by escape literature. Look, above all, for internal conflicts, even when more obvious external ones strike you first. Remember that while Hamlet had physical enemies like Claudius and Laertes, his principal conflict was with his own nature.
6. Be sure to try to resolve any comprehension problems now with your reading partner, teacher, or learning facilitator. But if you can't resolve them fully, just continue reading; they may well clarify themselves later in the book.

Section 1: Activity 4

1. If your predictions were all borne out, it means one of two things: either you're an unusually accomplished active reader or the novel you're reading is just a work of formula-written escape literature. Since none of the English 30 novels fall into this category, if you predicted future developments with some accuracy, you're to be congratulated. But don't worry if your predictions were off the mark; it probably just means you're reading a creative work of interpretive literature. Still, your predicting skills should improve the more you read.
2. Again, if the ending of a work of fiction is predictable, it's likely that the work is formula written. But be aware that some writers of this sort of fiction will throw in surprise endings just to confound readers' expectations. The test should be whether or not the ending is true to life and fairly achieved. An ending intended only to surprise readers and which reveals little about life has few merits. Similarly, an ending designed just to make readers feel good and remain secure in their cosy beliefs about life has no place in a work of interpretive literature.
3.
 - a. If you're reading an older novel, chances are greater that you'll have encountered a number of puzzling allusions. Most likely you were able to clarify many of these with the help of context clues; and fortunately, in a work the size of a novel it's not often that missed allusions will greatly hinder overall comprehension. An exception, perhaps, in the English 30 list is Graham Greene's *Monsignor Quixote*, which makes repeated references to Roman Catholic theology, Marxist doctrine, and Cervantes' famous literary work *Don Quixote*.
 - b. If context clues fail, there are reference works such as encyclopedias and dictionaries to fall back on. In some cases history texts might help. Your librarian should be able to direct you to other sources, and of course you can always ask people who would be likely to better understand the allusions than you do.
 - c. Were you at all successful? Don't forget to talk to your reading partner and/or teacher if necessary.
4. Many works of interpretive literature contain a good deal of irony, though sometimes it doesn't become apparent until late in the book (this, of course, is true by definition in the case of situational irony). But this irony may be subtle and require careful reading as well as an ability to draw inferences on the part of the reader; yet it can be vital that you pick up on it if you're to understand what the writer wants you to understand. If you didn't notice any ironic elements in your novel, think back carefully and discuss the matter with your reading partner, teacher, or learning facilitator.
5. Keep your list of comprehension concerns that you can't resolve at this stage. It may come in handy later.

Section 1: Follow-up Activities

Extra Help

1. The type of report this Extra help activity asks you to do is rather simplistic, but it might help you sort out the elements of your novel. It may also help prepare you for your Section 1 Assignment. Be honest and fair when discussing such things as your novel's strengths and weaknesses.
2.
 - a. Do your questions address issues that you find difficult? Would they get students thinking about issues you believe are central to the novel's purpose? Are they structured clearly?
 - b. You may, of course, find that answering your questions is a very difficult task; after all, at least some of them address aspects of the novel you yourself find difficult. The process of formulating and trying to answer the questions should, however, have focused your thinking and perhaps improved your comprehension. If you have a reading partner, discuss each other's questions together.

Enrichment

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

Section 2: Activity 1

1. a. and b. Ask yourself what can be learned by watching this character in action. What qualities does this character have that would make him or her stand out in a crowd? What strengths does the character possess? What weaknesses?
2. Responses will, of course, vary, but the questions listed below the principal question should guide your analysis. Remember that while the rugged hero and lovely heroine are very attractive characters in fiction, they aren't at all realistic. Plausible characters must be realistic human beings complete with strengths and flaws. Such characters must exhibit consistent behaviour that can be explained by referring to their personality traits and the situations in which they find themselves.

Did you refer to specific instances in your novel to illustrate your points?

3. Did you ask yourself to what degree the writer of your novel relies on the three methods of indirect characterization: (what characters say, what they do, what they think and feel)?

When considering direct methods of characterization used in your novel, did you note how much of it is accomplished through observations made by other characters and how much relies on direct comments made by an omniscient narrator? If other characters' observations are involved, did you consider any biases or inadequacies that would make their comments unreliable?

Did you refer to specific examples of characterization in your novel?

4. Did you find that this question forced you to see parallels you hadn't thought of before? Often the most interesting comparisons can be drawn between characters who on first glance seem very different. Is this true of your experience?
5. a., b., and c. Most novels, being lengthy and relatively complex works, have a variety of conflicts involving several different characters; but inevitably one of these will be the predominant conflict. You may find that while it's quite easy to understand your novel's central conflict, it isn't so easy to classify it. As in real life, the conflicts in novels can be messy things with internal and external aspects, though normally in interpretive works it's the internal qualities that make for the greatest interest. The most important thing is that you understand the conflicts faced by the characters in your chosen book and appreciate them in the fullness of their complexities.

Section 2: Activity 2

1. Responses will, of course, vary. Some novels are much more complex than others; but if you dig into any good, interpretive novel, you should be able to discover that it has things to say about a variety of subjects relating to the human experience.
2. This is a rather more difficult question than the preceding one. Often a work will explore areas of human life to reveal their complexities rather than to make precise statements about them. After all, nice, neat comments tend to oversimplify reality rather than to illuminate it. Still, it's worthwhile trying to articulate your writer's ideas even if it's for no other reason than to force yourself to think about them seriously. Often you'll be surprised at how doing this will clarify for you what a writer wants to say.
3. Again, a novel can be so complex a work that expressing its theme or unifying concept is often no easy task. Don't worry if it takes you a paragraph or two, and even then you may well feel that your formulation of your novel's unifying concept is entirely inadequate. Conversely, you may find that your novel's theme is very easy to articulate; either way, the important thing is that you try your best to understand what it is the writer hoped his or her readers would take away from their reading of the novel.

4. Sometimes honestly evaluating the theme of a work of literature can be even more difficult a task than articulating it. A well-crafted novel can give the impression of being faithful to the way things really are while in fact exaggerating and distorting reality. Writers may want so badly to create an impressive effect that they end up sacrificing reality in the process, and it's up to readers to be alert to such distortions and to judge the novels' themes accordingly. But remember, even a work that exaggerates may have something true and important to say; so try to evaluate your book's ideas fairly and thoughtfully.
5. Focusing in on an important decision or action at a key moment in a novel can help you understand just what makes a character "tick." Do you feel you understand the protagonist of your novel any better now?
6. Most novels have a variety of characters who are developed quite fully, in which case this question's task will be a relatively easy one. Some novels, though, will have a limited cast; if you've read such a novel, do your best with this question.
7. Characters who experience this kind of change are, as you know, called *dynamic* characters. In a novel, unlike a short story, it's often possible to have several dynamic characters. Were you able to explain satisfactorily both how and why any changes in values occurred?
8. In answering this question, think back to your response to question 4; after all, writers' values should be reflected in the themes of their works. And remember, in any work of interpretive fiction the protagonist may or may not share the writer's own values. It's up to active readers to understand where they part company.
9. This response will be personal. Be on guard against the persuasive powers of skilful writers; as mentioned earlier, they may distort reality somewhat and portray things in a light that makes their ideas seem, perhaps, more plausible than they really are. On the other hand, try to keep an open mind, and be willing to question your own values if they appear to be wanting. A willingness to re-evaluate your own attitudes and opinions in the light of new ideas is one important characteristic of an active, thoughtful reader.
10. Depending on the novel you've read, you may find an enormous amount of information on the author or very little. Did you find that what you learned cast some light on your understanding of the novel? As you've read in earlier modules, knowing something about the milieu out of which any work of art arose can help you understand it better, though it's important not to reduce a work of art to the status of a relic of a particular time and place. As a work of human creation, a true piece of art should rise above the milieu from which it came and have something to say to people of future ages as well as those of its own.

Section 2: Activity 3

1. If this question gave you trouble, be sure to review the material on style in earlier modules, especially Module 3. The novels in the list from which you selected yours represent a wide variety of styles. The older ones tend to be more formal and sometimes rather wordier than the more recent ones, but all of them are very readable.
2. This response will be personal. Were you able to defend your opinion with specific examples?
3. If you noted interesting wordings as you read, this question shouldn't have taken you long. Noting passages like this should also have helped sensitize you to the way writers can use language for effect. Good writers will almost always express things well, but sometimes they'll hit upon that perfect turn of phrase that can stop sensitive readers in their tracks with its power. Being aware of the power of words will increase the pleasure you'll get from reading good literature.
4. Be critical in your response here. If, for example, you felt that your writer, while trying to reveal something positive about life, used a dry, formal style that deadened rather than uplifted, say so. Don't just accept that this is the way the book is. Bear in mind that it could have been different. Often writers themselves are dissatisfied with the way they've written their works when they return to them later.

5. A novel that possesses artistic unity works as a whole to achieve the writer's purposes, so to answer this question you must have a clear idea of what the writer wanted to accomplish. Then you have to look at the various aspects of the work – elements like plot, setting, and character along with things such as style and tone – to see to what degree they work in harmony to achieve the goals of the writer.
6. You may have found this a difficult question. If you didn't note any symbols in your novel, it could mean simply that the writer didn't use this literary device. Many novels in the English 30 list do, however, contain symbolic references. This is something to discuss with your reading partner or learning facilitator.

It's probably more likely that you picked out certain motifs in your novel – recurring ideas, images, and references that help develop and communicate the work's theme(s). Your studies in drama in Modules 5 and 6 should have familiarized you with the way motifs work to reinforce a writer's ideas.

Section 2: Follow-up Activities

Extra Help

1. Being able to articulate what a literary work says about a variety of thematic topics is a skill you'll likely be called upon to use in your examinations. If it's something that gives you problems, practise doing it with other works you've read. If you can, discuss your ideas with a study partner.
2.
 - a. This question simply asks you to formulate, or express, the novel's central theme or themes. What ideas about life does the writer wish to communicate?
 - b. What narrative point of view is used? (Review Module 2 if you aren't sure.) Why would the writer have opted for this perspective? What are its advantages? How do these advantages relate to what the writer hopes to accomplish? If a first-person perspective has been used, how reliable is the narrator? What inferences are readers expected to make? Was an objective point of view used? If so, why?
 - c. What is the principal conflict? How does it help develop and communicate the novel's central ideas? Does it do a good job? Does it help focus readers' minds on the theme, or does it distract them from it?
 - d. Why have the characters been developed this way? What do they contribute to conveying the novel's unifying concept? Do they do what the writer hoped they would? Are they believable and interesting people?
 - e. Why did the writer place the novel where and when he or she did? Would another setting have been less effective? What features of the setting make it particularly appropriate?
 - f. Is the style of the novel one that aids in communicating its theme? Or does it interfere with the communication process, obscure the writer's meanings, and discourage reading? Does it help establish an appropriate mood, or is the feeling it creates at odds with the book's purpose? Were you able to cite examples to support your contentions?
 - g. Is the tone adopted by the writer to his or her writing and audience appropriate for achieving the intended goal? What about the novel's pervading mood? If the message was meant to be inspiring, is the mood of the book uplifting, or does it become ponderous and stodgy? Is the tone at all ironic? If so, does this element of irony aid in impressing the writer's ideas on his or her audience?
 - h. Note your novel's principal symbols (if indeed, there are any). What do they represent? What ideas do they reinforce? Are motifs present? What ideas do they convey?

Enrichment

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

Section 3: Activity 1

1. Knowing what comes later allows you to understand many things presented near a novel's beginning that likely went right by you the first time. A well-crafted novel will generally contain a great deal of material near the beginning that can be appreciated only when readers come back to it later, either by rereading or recalling it. Serious novelists expect their readers to do more than simply whip through their writings once. James Joyce, an Irish novelist and one of this century's great writers, even went so far as to say that he expected nothing less of his readers than that they devote their lives to studying his novels. While most authors would stop rather short of this expectation, the fact remains that to fully appreciate a good novel, a reader has to do much more than read it through one time.
2. Many novels will contain in their early chapters some foreshadowing of things to come – future conflicts and events, along, perhaps, with ways in which characters will develop as the story progresses. Good readers will often pick up on foreshadowing and use it to predict the course of future events. Often, of course, foreshadowing becomes apparent only later; then readers can think back and see how the writer was preparing them for certain events all along.
3. a. and b. Usually symbols and motifs reveal themselves only later on in a novel; after all, it's normally only when something is alluded to several times that its symbolic meaning becomes apparent. Going back and taking a second look at the early chapters in a novel should help you trace the development of symbols and motifs right through a novel. This should also help make their significance clearer.

Section 3: Activity 2

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

Section 3: Activity 3

1., 2., 3., and 4. Naturally, there can be no suggested answers for these questions. If you're having trouble generating ideas or coming up with a thesis, spend some time going over some of the literature you read earlier in the course and complete charts like those you did in Section 3 of Module 2. If you're having difficulties structuring your essay, you might look ahead to Module 8 and read the discussion of the major assignment in Part A of the diploma exam. Though this material is aimed specifically at the diploma exam, much of it is applicable to any critical essay. Be sure to refer to your handbook and a dictionary if necessary when editing your essay.

Section 3: Follow-up Activities

Extra Help

1. a. ¹ Barbara Kingsolver, The Bean Trees (New York: HarperCollins, 1988), p. 27.
- b. ² "Hunger stalks children, says aid worker," The Edmonton Journal, 3 Oct. 1994, Section A, p. 3.
- c. ³ Edward Von Der Porten, "The Hanseatic League," National Geographic, October 1994, Vol. 186, No. 5, p. 56.
- d. ⁴ Clara Thomas, "Margaret Laurence," The Canadian Encyclopedia, (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1988), Vol. 2, p. 1181.

or

⁴ Clara Thomas, "Margaret Laurence," The Canadian Encyclopedia, 1988.

- e. ⁵ "Liang Shu-ming," Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed.

2. a. Kingsolver, Barbara. The Bean Trees. New York: HarperCollins, 1988).
- b. “Hunger stalks children, says aid worker.” The Edmonton Journal, 3 Oct. 1994, Section A, p. 3.
- c. Von Der Porten, Edward. “The Hanseatic League.” National Geographic, Oct. 1994, Vol. 186, No. 5, p. 56.
- d. Thomas, Clara. “Margaret Laurence.” The Canadian Encyclopedia. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1988.

or

Thomas, Clara. “Margaret Laurence.” The Canadian Encyclopedia, 1988.

- e. “Liang Shu-ming.” Encyclopedia Britannica. 15th ed.

Using correct footnoting and bibliographic techniques can seem difficult at first, but with experience and the help of a handbook it becomes a relatively simple task. If you’re planning on going to university, it’s especially important to become comfortable with the process of documenting your sources whenever you write a paper that contains research.

Enrichment

There are no suggested answers for this activity.

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